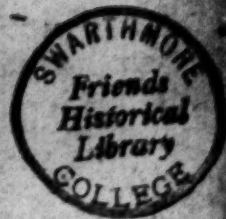


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The LIFE of a  
**CHRISTIAN**  
WHICH IS



A Lamp kindled and lighted from the Love  
of Christ, and most naturally discovereth its Original,  
by the purity, integrity and fervency of its  
motion, in love to its fellow-partners  
in the same life.

Briefly displayed in this its peculiar and  
distinguishing strain of Operation.

As also some few Catechistical Questions  
concerning the way of Salvation by  
**CHRIST.**

Together with a Post-script about Religion.

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By ISAAC PENINGTON, (*junior*) Esq;.

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John 13. 34, 35.

*A new Commandment I give unto you, That ye love  
one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one  
another.*

*By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye  
have love one to another.*

---

L O N D O N,

Printed by John Macock, for Lodowick Lloyd, and  
Henry Cripps, and are to be sold at their Shop in Popes-  
head Alley, near Lombard-street. 1653. n



# CHRISTIAN

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## The Preface.



*He most excellent kind of things is hid, and those kinds which appear, in their greatest worth and excellency are but vails to that life wherein lieth our happiness. Miserable were the estate of man, could he enter into that estate of life which he desireth and seeketh to enjoy; but more miserable is his condition, in that he is not only fallen short of that glory which is perfectly satisfactory in God, but of that glory which belongs to him to adore and solace himself in, in his estate and condition. All Truth is a shadow except the last, except the utmost: yet every Truth is true in its kind. It is substance in its own place, though it be but a shadow in another place, (for it is but a reflection from an intenser substance:) and the shadow is a true shadow, as the substance is a true substance. But this is the exceeding great misery of man, he meets not with Truth either in substance or shadow, but (that which the world is full of) vanity, a lye, a fiction of his own heart and the Devils, in imitation of the Truth of*

## The Preface.

God: A Doctrine of his own framing out of the Scriptures, Graces of his own forming in his Soul, and a Worship and Ordinances of his own creating for his publique or private Devotion. And yet such hath always been the thick darkness of man, that he could never see the lye (though never so palpable) in his right hand. When the light shineth, we shall all see where we are; but in the dark who is it that doth not mistake! We are all justifying our selves and condemning one another, but who is it that shall be found able to stand before the righteous Judgment of God? who is it in whom the true light and life of God is sown, and in whom doth it truly spring up and shoot forth?

Surely if ever there was need of provoking one another to love and good works, the season is now proper: Religion is grown so outward, and hath spread forth into such various forms, pleasing it self so much in that dress which it most affects, that the inward substantial part, viz. the life and power of it, is almost lost in the varieties of shapes and shadow: The excrescencies of Religion are become so exuberant, that the vigor of it is much drawn from the heart. I profess I can hardly blame men for growing out of love with Religion, both it and the Professors of it being grown so unlike what it and they once were, and still pretend to be. The worth of Religion consisteth not in a name or profession, but in such a life, power, righteousness and holiness as the spirit of man, with all the art and strength of man, cannot attain. Where this is and appears in truth, it will gain esteem in the spirits, hearts and consciences of men; whereas a name and profession of Religion, falling short of the truth and substance of that common righteousness and good-will  
which

## The Preface.

which is found in man, cannot but most deservedly become a reproach. Love, true love, the love of Christ (sown and springing up) is the life of true Religion; which as it is like the love in Christ, so it will appear and act like it. This love being of a deep intense and most pure nature, goeth forth with mighty strength and entireness towards the fountain of life from which it came, and towards all the branchings forth of this life into such as are changed and renewed by it: nay it extends it self to all men, even the greatest enemies, blessing them that curse, and wishing well to them that use the subjects of it in the most despightful manner; nay to all creatures, expressing it self in sweetness, meekness, tenderness, pity, mercifulness, and in what way else soever it can vent it self in doing good to any sorts of things, persons or creatures. This love in its way of acting (according to the pattern) to the household of faith, is in part here described and exposed for the view of such as may stand in need of such an help, and shall find hearts to make use of it.

And now Sirs, ye that profess Christianity, look to your spirits, Watch and keep your garments close about you, lest the Lord discover your nakedness, and men see your shame. Little do ye think what the Lord is in doing. This great noise which ye have heard is not for nothing. Life is sunk into the root: The branches are withered, and a purifying fire will not now serve the turn. God, as he can embrace where it may seem impossible, even that which was utterly cast off and lost for ever; so he can throw away that which seemeth saved, he can cast off that which seemeth united to him in a link of perpetuity: God can both raise up from among the stones children unto Abraham, causing them to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in

## The Preface.

the Kingdom; and likewise keep out the children of the Kingdom, nay thrust them out of that Kingdom whereof they have already possession in part: Ye have had the experiment of this already in the Jews, take heed of it the second time. But ye will say, the natural people were but a type or shadow, and stood upon other terms then the spiritual seed did, and therefore that might very well befall them which cannot befall these. This is very true in itself, though not true as it is understood and applyed. They are not the spiritual seed which account themselves so, but those whom God maketh so by the generating vertue of his own Spirit, and yet those that are the spiritual seed (or rather they in whom the spiritual seed is) may fall in their outward station, and so lose that life and sweetness which they had in their standing. But I shall not at this time dispute the case, All that I shall now say to you is, Look to your feet, Look to your standing, Look well to the Rock whereupon ye bottom your Souls, and look that ye be well bottomed on that Rock, lest either your bottom fail under you, or the boisterousness of a wind ye have not yet been acquainted with, shake you from it. He who is not well rooted in the Truth, may easily be shaken from the Truth: and he whose root is not good will certainly be cut down root and all, when the Ax is layd to him. If the Lord have a time to pluck up what he himself hath planted, to break down what he himself hath built, alas what will become of the plantations and fabricks of man in his own spirit, when the Lord shall come to deal with him! O Sirs, Look to your selves, Look to your Life, Look to your Salvation, Look to your Happiness, Look to your Crown. Think of that advice which was given to the Gentiles upon this very consideration, wherewith I shall conclude

## The Preface.

*conclude this Preface : BE NOT HIGH-MINDED,  
(Be not over-conceited of the excellency of your own light,  
Do not push with your horns at others, Be not always so  
busie in engaging the powers of this world against your pcor  
afflicted brethren, nay do not so much as judg them in your  
own spirits ; ye are not to sit in the seat of Judgment to judg  
others, but to come to the throne of Judgment your selves  
to have sentence passed upon your light, upon your life, up-  
on your heart, and all the motions of it, which are not yet  
justified, how justifiable soever in your own eyes,) BUT  
FEAR, fear what the Lord can do, fear what the Lord  
may do, fear what the Lord will do. Be not exalted above  
others, but fear concerning your selves. Be not proud be-  
cause of your present station, but fear your fall. Lift not  
up your selves above others in your own spirits, but throw  
down your selves at his feet who is a laying all flat, because  
he finds so much fault with every height, that he will have  
nothing exalted any more ; and this ye will find your best  
security in the cloudy and dark day, which how far soever  
ye may put from you, or how far soever it may seem from  
you, maketh haste.*

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THE

# The Preface.

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 Do not puff with your powers as others; Be not always so  
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THE  
Life of a Christian.

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JOHN 15. 12.

*This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*



Christ being now to leave his Disciples, (his time drawing very near) begins to break the matter to them, to let them understand the *necessity* of his *departure* from them, and to prepare them for those *directions* he was about to give them, how to behave themselves in *this world* during his *absence*.

In the 33 Verse of the 13 Chap. He tells them he must be with them but a little while, and what he said to the *Jews* they should find true also, namely, that he was going whither they could not follow him.

B

Little

*Little children, yet a little while I am with you: Ye shall seek me, and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you.*

The whole 14 Chapter is taken up with this argument, wherein he explaineth unto them many things about it. . The end of his going, Vers. 2. *I go to prepare a place for you.* The certainty of his return to them, Vers. 3. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto my self, that where I am, there ye may be also.* Their own knowledg both concerning the place whither he was going and the way thither, which if they could retire inwardly enough into their own spirits, they would be sensible of, Vers. 4. *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.* His care of them in the time of his absence, that they should want nothing, but have what ever they can desire, he would speed all their prayers, nay he would fulfil them himself, Vers. 13, 14. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.* Neither would he leave them destitute here on Earth, but send his entirest bosom Friend to dwell continually in their bosoms, Vers. 16. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever:* Who should do great things for them, Vers. 26. *He shall teach you all things, and bring things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* Lastly he would give them a very rich blessing at his parting, given after such a manner of way as the world cannot give, Vers. 27. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* Hereupon he tells them how they ought to part with him, with what temper of spirit, which love to him upon a right understanding would work in them, namely with joy and not with

with grief. For we willingly, readily and joyfully part with that, which we entirely love, for its advancement, especially if it be very great, and also very beneficial to us. This he urgeth, *Vers. 28. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater then I.*

Now there are two things Christ most especially bends himself to urge upon them, to leave imprinted on their spirits at his departure. The one relates to *Faith*, the other to *Obedience*: That they would look to their Faith, and to their Obedience: that they would beleeve on him, and keep his Commandments. He had bid them look to their Faith in the first Verse of this 14 Chap. *Beleeve in God, and beleeve in me.* And he had bid them look to their Obedience, in a very affectionate strain of expression, *Vers. 15. If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* If ye love me, do it. If ye love me, ye will do it. His commands are ever forcible with us, whom we entirely love. He followeth this consideration, being a very close one, *Vers. 21, 23, 24.* professing that he that loveth cannot but do this, that he that doth this doth love, that he that doth not love cannot do this, and he that doth not this doth not love.

In this 15 Chapter he proceeds to urge both again. He begins with Faith, *Vers. 4. Abide in me, and I in you.* I have told you these things that ye might beleeve, (*Chap. 14. 29.*) and I am your *Vine* whereinto ye are ingrafted, from and in whom ye have your life; *abide in me.* When I depart from you with my bodily presence, do not let your faith depart from me, but as ye came to me by faith, so stay with me by faith: *abide in*

*me, and I in you: stay in me by faith, and keep me in you by faith. He presseth this upon them from divers considerations, as first there is no bringing forth of fruit else, Vers. 4. As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me. Secondly, without this ye will be in danger of your Souls, nay of a truth ye will miscarry, Vers. 6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. As faith declines, life wastes, and the Soul runs further and further into the danger of the fire, which by faith alone is avoyded. Thirdly, Hereby ye may have what ye will. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, if your faith remain, and your obedience also, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. And therefore he bids them also look to their Obedience, for that was the way both to glorifie God, Vers. 8. and to abide in the love of Christ, Vers. 9, 10. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my Commandments, ye shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Fathers Commandments, and abide in his love. Not as if Christ did love them simply for their obedience, no more then God did love him for his obedience simply: but as this was the way wherein the power of the Father led him to remain in the love of the Father, so this is the way Christs power guides them in to abide in his love: for God and Christ must be just in dispensing their love even to their own, according to the Rule of that dispensation which they set up, and under which they put their own.*

Now Christ tells them plainly *vers. 11.* the ground why he did thus vehemently urge these things upon them,

them, which was double. 1. That his joy might remain in them, that that joy which he had in them from their obedience in and unto the faith might remain, that he might still find the same cause of joy in them. 2. That their joy which they had in him might be filled, that they might have not only joy, but fullness of joy in Christ, which ariseth from the other, for our joy in Christ is filled from Christs joy in us : When he delights in us, in our state, temper, and motions, in the dispensation wherein he sets us, then he spreadeth himself abroad so sweetly and pleasantly in us, as causeth us abundantly to delight in him : both these are mentioned in the 11 vers. *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* As if he had said : 'Tis true, though ye should be negligent of these things, and run into great dangers thereby, yet I might bring you to Heaven at last ; nay I would not lose you : but I should have no great delight in you here, nor would ye take any great delight in me, neither would God get any great honour by you, (according to verse 8.) But now, I would not only bring you to Heaven at last, but take great delight in you here, and fill your hearts with joy too, and therefore would I have you abide in me, and keep my Commandments, which is the only way thereunto ; These are the very ends that I so press these things thus earnestly upon you for. Now if ye would know what Commandments I mean, this is it I chiefly intend, namely of love one to another. *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

In the words we may take notice of three particulars.

1. The Command it self. *That ye love one another.*

2. The rule of this command, the rule whereby the love that answers this command must be squared, and that is Christs love, it must be squared by the love which Christ had in him, and which he manifested unto, and exercised towards his. *As I have loved you.*

3. Christs peculiar owning of both, both of the command and the rule, or of the command according to the rule. *This is my commandment. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

To glance a little at the sence of the words.

*That ye love one another.*

*That ye]* Ye my disciples whom I have cherished all my days, and am now about to dye for : for whom I came from Heaven, and for whom I go again to Heaven. Ye who were mine before the world was, Ye who are mine, and have been mine throughout my whole ministry, Ye who shall be mine for ever and ever.

*That ye love]* Love in heart, love in word, love in action. Bear a tender affection to them in the bottom of your souls : Speak well of them, and good for them, both to God and men : and do any service of love for them. Let them have all the interest in you, and power with you that love can command. Think it not much to suffer with them, nay to suffer even death it self for them. Love is the continual drinking in, and the continual letting out of desire, delight and service. Our desire is still after, our delight is still in, our service is still about what we love. And love  
though

though it be still busie about what it loves, yet it can never drink in enough, nor let out enough towards it. Two things make it unsatisfiable, Want of fulness to vent upon its love, and want of ability and skill to vent what it hath upon its love.

*One another,]* This is the extent, the bounds of this love, it must reach to all that belong to Christ: and it is no difficult matter, no hard task, for it is only to them that have the same image, the same nature, the same life, the same beginning, the same end. If thou lovest thy self aright, if thou lovest Christ aright, then thou wilt also love these who are truly part of thy self, and part of Christ. I know the world will hate you, and I do not bid you love it, for there is none of this kind of loveliness in it, nothing in them to receive this love, nothing in them for you to fasten this love upon, but I bid you love one another. The world is not to draw forth your love, not to partake of this love, be it never so excellent: nor must any of these miss of it, be they never so weak, never so vile.

*As I have loved you.]* Just as I have caused my heart to go forth toward you, as I have ever been tender of you, and passed by all manner of weaknesses in you, as I have ever thought well of you my self, and spoke well of you to the Father, not taking notice of any of your sins or frailties further then for your good, as I have performed all manner of services to you, I have descended that ye might ascend, I have fallen that ye might arise, I have not stuck at giving my very life for you, and all my strength and glory to you, so true, so great, so strong hath my love unto you been: even so after this manner do ye  
kindle

kindle affections and so act them one towards another.

*This is my commandment,* ] This is that commandment which is properly mine. This is that commandment which of all other I will own. This is that especial commandment, which God in this his ministration by me towards you, giveth you. This is that commandment, which my soul, which my heart, which my nature is most in. This is that which I most desire to find in you, which I from my self, from my own heart and soul enjoyn you. *This is my commandment. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, and thy neighbor as thy self:* these were *Moses* commandments, but *that ye love one another*, this is my commandment. That man should love the Lord who made him, and his neighbor whom he made like him: that the Jews should love God who made them in that their dispensation a vessel of Glory beyond all Nations, and that they should love their fellow-brethren in that dispensation, yea and in nature too; This was *Moses* commandment. But that he who hath the seed of the new-life in him, should love him who is a partner with him in the same life, This is Christs commandment. The love to this brotherhood is from the nature and by the command of Christ.

The words do naturally and plainly signifie and hold forth thus much unto us.

Observ. *That for the Saints or Disciples of Christ to love one another, upon such grounds and in such a way as he loved them, is a thing his heart is very much upon.*

It is the main thing he hath commended to them,  
it

it is the great injunction he hath layn upon them. As it was the especial Command which God gave Christ, to love his Saints, and that which his heart was most upon of all the Commands which ever he gave him; which if he had neglected, the keeping of all the rest would have been of no value: So it is the especial Command which Christ hath given to his people, and which he most eyeth them in, that they love one another. *This is my Commandment.* Among all the Commandments I have dispensed to you, I shall observe you most in this. Ye must keep them all to remain in my love, vers. 10. but this is the most principal of them all; this is that which I understandingly and most affectionately give you in especial charge as mine: *This is my Commandment.*

To evidence how much the heart of Christ is in this Commandment, we need go no further then this place for the illustration and demonstration of. Consider but his giving out the Commandment; observe but the circumstances of it, and it will very clearly appear.

There are three things very observable about it. *The time* of his giving it out, *The manner* of his giving it out, and *his vehement pressing of it*, both then at his first enjoining of it, and again and again in this his farewell Sermon.

First, For *the time*, There are two things eminent in that.

One is, in that it was when his love had been well grown towards them, after it had had long duration and frequent exercise, this was particularly taken notice of by this Evangelist just before his relation of it, Chap. 13. 1. Having loved them constantly, having

loved them from first to last, having loved them as his own with a love suitable in strength to the relation, having thus loved them unto the very end, what doth he for them? how doth he shew it? Why he addresseth himself to the imposing of this Command in the most engaging manner that could be, as may be read in the following Verses.

The other is, that it was just afore his passion, when he was about to do the greatest act of love for them that could be done, (for greater love could no man shew, as he tells them, Chap. 15. 13.) and answerably had been strengthening his affections towards them, that he might do it the more willingly; even then, when his heart was most operative in love towards them, then he gives out this Command, as it is observed by this Evangelist *John*, Chap. 13. 1. *Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And Supper being ended, &c.* Having his eye upon his Passion, and his heart upon his Disciples, for whom he was to dye, and whom he was now to leave, the strength of his Soul works it self out in love towards them, and the strength of his love thus vents it self, in contriving how he might most effectually imprint this Command upon them. Having so great things to suffer, and his eye being upon it, for he *knew that his hour was come*, one would have expected that his thoughts should have been taken up about them; and so they are, but yet not so as to divert him from his contrivance and dispatch of this, which that he should now be so busie and industrious about, it shews plainly how much his heart was in it.

● For

2. For the manner of his giving out this Commandment, It is very observable, for it was both by *example*, by *precept*, and accompanied with *reason* backing both.

1. It was commended to them by his own *example*, he taught it them by his own *practise*, which is the most effectual way of teaching. He would not barely by word of mouth issue out this Command, but he sets his own *pattern* first before them; He would do it himself before he would impose it on them. And his example is very full. For, 1. That service of love which now he did set his example before them in, *viz. washing the Saints feet*, was one of the lowest acts of service. We are all apt to perform honorable acts of service, nay perhaps some low acts of service to them that are far above us in gifts and graces, or to persons in a sick and weak condition: but to persons that are in health, and to persons that are beneath us in degree, love will carry very few to perform such an office of love as Christ did here: yet these Disciples of Christ were far below him in the graces and gifts of the Spirit of God, besides that present relation wherein he stood as a *Lord and Master* unto them. 2. He did it in the lowest manner, with the towel girded about him, *vers. 4.* as a *servant*, they sitting, and he standing, *vers. 12.* and in a ready manner, for he rose from the table to do it, and took the towel, and girded himself. 3. He did it to *Judas*, who was no Saint, which takes off that great objection which is so ready to rise in mens spirits, *viz. If I knew he were a Saint I could do it, but I fear he is an hypocrite.* Why Christ did it to an hypocrite, to one whom he knew to be an hypocrite. That *Judas* was there, may appear by this, it was not the Passover night,

night, but the night before, Chap. 13. 1. and Christ after this gives him the sop, vers. 26. Lastly, he did it, not in the meanness and lowness of his spirit, being now cast down with the sight of that misery which was hastening upon him; but with the view and consideration of his own greatness, as appears vers. 3. *Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, He riseth from supper, &c.* He had not forgot how great he was before this Ministration, how great he was in this Ministration, and how great he should be immediately again, but his eye was fixed upon his glory and greatness in and from and with God, when he did this to them.

2. There was not only example, but precept added to example (and that again and again) and that in a very sweet way, telling them that they ought to do it, and that his doing of it, was but to teach them their duty. It was not necessary for him to do it, only he chose this way of imprinting his instruction the better upon them.

3. He adds a forcible reason, that he being their Lord and Master, and having made known to them his pleasure, and that both by his own command and pattern, they cannot be excused if now they neglect it. Vers. 13, 14, 15, 16. *Ye call me Master and Lord, &c.*

3. For his vehement pressing of it. He doth not only lay it before them, but he presseth it home upon them. 1. He shews them that it is their duty, Vers. 14. *Ye ought also to wash one anothers feet.* 2. He tells them, that the meaning of this piece of service in this abased manner, was to commend it to them so closely, that they might not avoyd it, or think much of it: Vers. 15.

For

*For I have given you an example, that ye should do, as I have done to you.* 3. By enforcing the reason of his example, *Verf. 16. Verily, verily I say unto you, The servant is not greater then his Lord; neither he that is sent, greater then he that sent him.* The greatest among the Saints, are such as are sent by Christ, and yet they are not greater then Christ who sent them, and therefore need not think much of that (as of an inferior piece of work) which Christ did. 4. By pronouncing blessedness upon them according as they did observe it, *Verf. 17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Happy are ye if ye learn from this pattern, if ye take out this copy, if ye practise the duties of this Law of Love according to it. *The happineß of the Disciples of Christ, consisteth much in knowing and practising the duties of love* (even in the meanest offices of it) *one towards another.* Thus he drives home this duty here.

He urgeth it again in this same Chap. v. 34. where he calleth it a new Commandment, to set their spirits more eager upon it, *A new Commandment I give unto you.* And what is this new Commandment? *That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* He had been telling them of his departure from them, and that very affectionately in the foregoing Verse, *Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me, &c.* My little children, I must leave you, Poor sweet babes, poor little brats, I must be gone, I cannot stay with you: But when I am gone remember this Commandment (ye little think what sweetness ye will find in it) *that ye love one another, with the same love and after the same manner as I have loved you; performing the same services of love with the same willingness and delight.* And then in the

following Verse he knocks in another nail to drive it yet more home: *By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another.* He makes it the badg of Discipleship, that whereby men should be distinguished to appertain to him, to be retainers to him: *By this shall all men know, &c.* It is a great priviledg and dignity to be known to be a Disciple to Christ, to be taken notice of by men as a retainer to Christ, as one who doth not meerly pretend, but hath indeed learned of him. And *love to the Brethren* (such love as Christ expressed) is an unquestionable character, a distinguishing badg, such as the world cannot but acknowledg to be a peculiar property of a Disciple, which you have had from Christ, and which none else can attain.

In the 14 Chapter he perswaderh them very affectionately to keep his Commandments, Vers. 15, 21, 24. and so again, Chap. 15. 10. *If ye keep my Commandments ye shall abide in my love, &c.* declaring unto them in the next Verse, that his intent in this vehement Injunction, Exhortation and Perswasion of his, was entirely for their good: Vers. 11. *These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* And then immediately in the very next words, vers. 12. sheweth what Commandment he did chiefly mean all this while, *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.* These things I speak, I thus vehemently press obedience upon you for your own good, that I might have joy of you (which will be very profitable for you) and your hearts might be full of joy: But this is the Commandment which I principally intend, and which I most especially expect obedience unto; This is the Commandment which is peculiarly and properly mine, which my joy will be greatest

greatest in seeing observed, and the observation of which will conduce most towards the filling of your hearts with joy, *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, &c.* How he proceeds yet further to fix it upon their spirits by very close considerations in the following part of the Chapter, as vers. 14. and 17. I shall not need to make mention of, it being already so fully and clearly evidenced. Out of the abundance of the heart, out of the vehemency of his desire in this particular, hath his mouth uttered all these things.

For the further opening of it, these two particulars following are to be enquired into.

1. *How Christ loved his Saints?* with what kind of love? what his love was, and how it went forth towards them? and so we shall see the rule whereby our love is to be squared one towards another.

2. *Why the heart of Christ is so much set upon this,* to have his Disciples thus love one another? why of all other he maketh this his especial Commandment?

Touching the former, *What the love of Christ to Saints was?* or *how Christ loved his Saints?*

*Love*, we know, *is that glue which unites things together* (or, at least, makes them desire, study and endeavor union) causing them both to wish well and do well one for another, according to the nature and degree of it. As *hatred* is that which dissevers things, and makes them wish ill and do ill one to another, according to the nature and strength of it: So *love*, which is contrary to it, doth the clean contrary. What maketh God to hold a kind of union with all his creatures, and to wish well to them, and do good for them, according to their several ranks, but his love to them in its several degrees? It is from Gods love that he provideth food  
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for the creatures, but from a further degree of love that he provideth Redemption for Man, and from a further degree of love yet that he foundeth and fasteneth the Union (and universal Communion) between him and his Elect in Christ.

Now to search out this Love, we must seek both into the *Nature* of it, what kind of affection it is ; and into the *grounds* of it, whereupon it is fastened ; as also into the *degree* and *strength* of it, and into its several *actings*, and the *manner* of its actings.

I. For *the nature of it*. We know (after our manner of knowledg) that there is a twofold Love : A *natural* love and a *supernatural*, an *earthly* and an *heavenly*.

The *natural love* is that affection which God hath put between creatures from some suitableness among them. There is an earthly affection which God hath placed in this Earth towards the things of this Earth, which as they come all out of the same Earth, so they are a kin and bear a natural affection to one another, though in this hidden state (even in the things of this world) both the relation and affection is much unknown. There is an universal love among all creatures (even there where there appeareth an antipathy) from some general likeness, suitableness and connaturalness among them : but this love is more especially to be discerned and taken notice of among creatures of the same kind.

This love is heightened in man, above all other creatures, according to the elevation of his nature. It is a stamp upon his Soul suitable to the nature of his Soul. It is a kind of more spiritual glue in him (as his nature is more spiritual, whereas it is but a corporeal glue in other creatures) a tincture whereof still remains, though

though much defaced in him by his fall, as all his other excellencies of Nature are.

The *supernatural love* is that which grows in Gods own heart, and which he writes with his own finger on the hearts of whom he pleaseth, and in what degree he pleaseth. It is that love of a spiritual nature, which floweth from God the root, into Christ the spiritual man, and so through him into all the spiritual branches, which are ingrafted into and grow in God and in Christ. So that this love must needs be of a more excellent, high, pure nature then that which is naturally sown, or can naturally grow in the heart of man.

There are all kind of natural excellencies (which are the shadows of the spiritual) in man naturally: They are sown in the nature of the first *Adam*, as the spiritual excellencies are in the nature of the second *Adam*. There is a natural faith in man, whereby man is able to beleeve, upon good arguments layd before him; but yet this is not *THE FAITH*, this is not *THE HEAVENLY GIFT*. So there is a natural love in the Soul of man, whereby he cannot but love God, and every thing that is lovely and excellent, (though he cannot but also hate them in those various dispensations and discoveries of them wherein God still crosseth his fleshly wisdom and desire,) but this is not this love. This love is of a more inward, of a more full, of a more substantial nature then that which groweth in the Soul of man. Now such was the love of Christ, of this kind of nature; Not that affection which did naturally belong to his Soul, but that spiritual affection which came into his heart with that special grace which God gave him, with that special nature which God breathed into him. As his nature was different from the nature

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of *Adam*, so was the faith of it, and so was the love of it. Every thing in him was of the same stamp with his nature. His love was the very spiritual image and substance of that love which remains in the heart of God.

This is the nature of it in general, whereby it is distinguished from all things which are not spiritual, and more especially from that love which is naturally planted in the Soul of man. But now we are to enquire into the nature of it yet further, whereby we may distinguish it from all other spiritual things. And that may be done by the common properties of love which are peculiar to it in and according to its kind, as by its *desire of union*, by its *wishing well to the object beloved*, by its *readiness to do for it*, &c.

There is nothing desires union but love. *Faith* indeed unites, but it doth not so desire union as *love*, it doth not desire that kind of union which *love* doth. *Faith* lays hold for help, the desire of faith is help; but the desire of love is union. So take *hope*, *patience*, *humility*, *meekness*, &c. they have their several other properties and operations agreeable to their nature, but not this of uniting, they leave this to love. And nothing wisheth well to the object but *love*: *Faith* wisheth good from the object, *Hope* expecteth good from the object, but 'tis Love only that wisheth good unto it. And it is love only that acts for it, that acts for the good of it: *Faith* will make a man work for his own good, but it is love which makes him work for the good of another. It is faith whereby we fasten on God for our own happiness, but it is love that makes us eye his glory, and work for him: Or if faith also do this, it is from that influence that love hath upon it, so that still it is love, love in faith, love with faith, love by faith.

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This then is the love of Christ, namely that spiritual affection planted in his new nature (besides that affection planted in him as a man) whereby he desireth union with, and wisheth well to his, and whereby he is ready to do any thing for them.

I I. As touching *the grounds* whereupon Christ loveth them, the grounds whereupon this love, which is planted in Christ, is drawn forth towards them, They are these.

1. The first is *the Fathers love*. God the Father loveth them, and therefore Christ the Son loveth them also. As God has writ the same love in the heart of Christ, as is in his own, so it goeth forth the same way. There are two ways wherein the heart of God goeth forth exceedingly, and the heart of Christ followeth him in both, which are himself and his people; his own glory, and his peoples welfare: God loveth them both entirely, and Christ treads in his very steps in each.

First, for Gods glory, It was the main thing Christ aimed at in all he did, his greatest work was to honour his Father, *I honour my Father, and ye dishonour me*: and *Joh. 17.4. I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*: His glorifying of God he looks upon and casts up as the sum of all he did or was to do. And if any did wrong his Father, he felt it; *the reproaches of them which reproached thee, fell upon me*. What made him so zealous about the *Temple*, but because it was his *Fathers house*; which though expiring and growing out of date, was as yet his Fathers, and therefore more worthy then to be so prophaned: *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*. Yea the very end for which he desired his own glory was, that he

might be the more able to glorifie his Father. *Father, glorifie thy Son, that thy Son also may glorifie thee.*

And for the people of God, Christs heart goeth forth in wonderful love towards them. He loved them all his life long even to the very last: *Joh. 13. 1. Having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the last.* His heart was ever working towards them, He never thought any thing too good for them, yea he layd down his very life freely for them, and while he was doing it, his thoughts ran more upon them then upon himself.

God had expressed perfect love to them, in that he had chosen them as his peculiar treasure, which he would enrich suitably to himself, and enjoy in himself, and make happy with himself for ever. He chose Christ but to bring this about, who in that respect is beneath them, though as he is the chiefest part of this treasure, and the head of it to them, he is far above them. Now Christ having just such an heart as his Father had, could not chuse but entirely love that which his Father so loved before him. Having the same love with his Father, he could not chuse but act towards the same object as his Father did. The love in Christ is the same still in him as it was first in God, and therefore cannot but behave it self as the same.

Christ doth *what he seeth the Father do*: Now seeing the Father do this so eminently, he cannot but do it as eminently also. His love is a copy of the Fathers love, and his actings forth of it are a draught of the Fathers actings. This ground Christ himself intimates, *Joh. 17. 20. That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* Christ desires perfect union with them, to be perfectly in them, that is the prime  
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and compleat operation of love: yea but what is the rule whereby, what is the attractive which he desires might draw him into them? why that he himself tells you is the Fathers love. Let thy love, the same love, wherewith thou hast taken possession of me, take possession of them also, and then I will immediately come after and dwell in them too. It is from thy love that I love them, and therefore I must first see thy love go before, and then I will soon follow. And for this cause take I such pains with them, that I might make them a fit habitation for thy love, and then that I my self might dwell and enjoy them in the same love, and the same love in them.

2. Another ground of Christs love to them is, *his Fathers will*. His Father gave them him to love, and commanded him to love them, yea and gave him that love wherewith he should love them. As the Father giveth Christ to us to love; so he gave us to Christ to love: And as there are a great many duties we owe Christ, but love is the main; So of all the duties Christ did owe us (as to leave all his glory, and come into this world and seek us out, and to dye for us, to arise for us, to ascend for us, to take possession of our life and inheritance for us in Heaven, and to take care of us here on Earth) love was the main, and that which fitted him for all the rest, even as it fitteth us for all our duties, both towards God, towards Christ, and towards one another. Yea as this was the especial command which Christ gave us, to *love one another*; so it was the especial command God gave Christ, to *love us*.

In this 15 Chapter of this Gospel of *John*, Christ telleth his Disciples, *That if they keep his Commandments, they shall abide in his love: even as he kept his*

*Fathers Commandments, and abode in his love.* And of all his Commandments he picks out one presently in the 12 Verse following, as if he would commend it unto us as that which will have the most especial influence of all, to keep us in his love, which is this of loving one another. Now how cometh Christ to pick out this of all the rest, but that his Father had set him such an example, he had picked it out for him, it was the main thing he had given him in charge, and the main thing he expected from him, as he intimates in the 10 Chapt. of this Gospel, vers. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* He had been speaking vers. 15. of laying down his life for the sheep, from his knowledg of the Father, from his knowledg of the heart and will of the Father. *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.* The Father knoweth me whom he hath entrusted, and I know him who hath entrusted me, and want neither love to him nor them, but lay down my life for them. And other sheep he had to take care of, besides those of this fold, which he would take care of also, vers. 16. Now says he, *therefore my Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* This is that act of love in me, this is that act of obedience from me to the will and command of the Father, which draweth and engageth the heart of the Father so exceedingly to me. *Therefore my Father loveth me, because I lay down my life,* so readily, in such a way of love, in such strength of love to my sheep, *that I might take it again* to perfect their Salvation. So that God gave Christ this especial command, as well as Christ giveth it us; and his heart was so much in it, that his love went out towards Christ, as  
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Christs heart went out in love towards his sheep : This was the motive, the attractive of the Fathers love to him ; *Idcirco, therefore or for this my Father loveth me, because I lay down my life, &c.*

And could God do less then give Christ a command to love them, when he gave them him to this very end, and therefore gave them unto him in all such relations as might draw love, as, *as his brethren (wherefore he is not ashamed to call them brethren) as his own children (behold I and the children which thou hast given me) as his own most proper Spouse, as the very natural members of his own body?* What could his meaning be in all this, but that he should exceedingly love and cherish them? And surely his Father would never have given them him, unless he had had very good assurance that he would love them well: And therefore, to put that out of doubt, he gave him love first before he gave him them, and when the *Law* was in his bowels, then he calls him forth to take care of them, *Psal. 40. 7, 8.* God first writ the Law of Love in his heart, and then he gave him these to love. And this is a second ground which doth much prevail with the heart of Christ, and would sway exceedingly with him, had he no affection of his own unto them: It is his Fathers will and pleasure, it is the great command of the Father to him, that he should love them, very truly, fully and heartily, even as the Father loved him. But thirdly.

3. Christ loveth them because of *their relation to the Father and himself.* They belong to the Father, and they belong to him; they are Gods proper goods, and his proper goods: *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* They are the children of the most High, the sons and daughters of his own Father, his brethren and sisters by genera-

*Generation ; his Spouse, the Spouse which his Father prepared for him and brought him, the Spouse which he himself purchased with his dearest blood.* There is the strength and sweetness of the choicest relations to draw his love, and these relations set off too with all the commendable accents that can be. Now we know, *Relations carry love with them*, though there be no other ground of love besides the relation. It is not deformity (or any other unloveliness in others eyes) which can eat out the love of relations. A man loveth his brother, his sister, his wife, his child ; though black, though crooked, though weak in body and mind. And this is another ground why Christ loveth his, it is because they are his and the Fathers, it is because of their relation to the Father and him.

4. There is yet a further ground why Christ loveth them, which is because of *their likeness to himself and the Father* ; because his *image* (which is also the image of the Father) is implanted in them, and shall be perfected upon them.

*Likeness* is the greatest attractive of love that can be (for it most naturally draweth it forth.) Likeness in nature, likeness in feature, likeness in disposition, &c. are strong drawers. Now there is the greatest likeness in the Saints to Christ that can be : There is no such likeness to him any where else to be found, and therefore no such love can go forth from him any whither else. They have the same nature, the same lineaments, the same course, the same end with him. They have *grace for grace* with Christ. They are like to him in every respect ; There is not one thing admirable in him, but there is the likeness of it in them. Is he *wise, holy, full of faith, love, all spiritual wisdom and excellency* ?  
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why they have not only a share in these, but they have also a copy of them writ on their own hearts. Did he *descend, suffer, dye ? &c.* They follow him in the same steps, they take the same course with him, and are changed and perfected by him through these, after the same manner as he was changed and perfected by his Father (who made him *perfect through sufferings*) 2 Cor. 3. 18. so that every day they grow more like him. It is no marvel therefore if Christ love them so, how can he chuse, they being already so far in, and growing so continually further and further into his likeness ?

And they are like his Father too : And next likeness to our selves, the image of our parents doth exceedingly take us in any : and it takes Christ as much as his own likeness, because he loveth the image of his Father, as well as himself.

These are the grounds whereupon the love of Christ is drawn forth towards the Saints.

III. For *the degree and strength* of it, it is the greatest that can be. It is not only the most excellent kind of love, but it is advanced and drawn forth likewise to the utmost kind of degree. He loveth them *with all his heart, and with all his soul*. Greater love there cannot be then Christs, nor can love go out with greater strength: And therefore Christ when he would express how he would have us love our brethren to the utmost degree of our love (of that love God hath placed in us) he bids us love one another as he hath loved us.

The strength of Christs love to his appears in these three things. In his wishing well to them, in his desire of union with them, in his readiness to do any thing for them. According to the degree and strength of these,

is the degree and strength of love. For these as they flow from love, so they rise in height, life and vigor according to the degree and strength of love.

1. The strength of Christs love appeareth *in his wishing well unto them*. We ever wish good to the party we love, according to the degree of love we bear them: Now Christ wisheth to his the greatest good that can be. Look what ever is good for them in this world, what ever is good for them in the other world, he wisheth unto them in the fullest manner and measure.

There are three things chiefly good for his *in this world*, in that station wherein they stand, and in that course which they are to run here, which are these. *Preservation from the evil of the world, Communion with their God, and to joy in God through him.* (*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. It is good for me to draw nigh to God. Rejoyce evermore.*) And all these he wisheth to his very heartily and fully.

See how vehemently he urgeth that request, that God would *preserve them from the evil of the world, Joh. 17.* He urgeth it so far, that he is fain to make an apology for it, that it was not so much in reference to him, as to them and their state; it was not so much to draw the thing down from him, as to draw up their hearts to beleieve the certain descent of it, Vers. 13.

Then for *Communion with God*, He did not only begin it, but he hath taken all ways to preserve & increase it. He hath layd the foundation of it between them, he hath entred them into it, and hath appointed Ordinances for the exercise and continuation of it, that therein God and they might still be meeting. He receives God on the one hand, and them on the other hand, and knits them both in himself, causing them to flow into and live

live in each other. He knows God will abide in him, and thither he bringeth them, and biddeth them abide there also, *Joh. 15.* that they may still be sucking the sweetness of God through him, that being the only way : for as they come at first to enjoy God by Christ, so they must ever draw the sweetness of God through Christ.

And for *joying in God*, he would always have them be doing it, and therefore leads them the ready way to it, *Joh. 14. 1.* *Let not your heart be troubled; beleeve in God, and beleeve in me.* Yea he would have them have full joy, *Joh. 14. 11.* *These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* Thus he tells them, and he tells God the same, *Joh. 17. 13.* *And now I come to thee: and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.* I am coming to Heaven to thee, where I shall have joy enough, to sit at thy right hand, where is fulness of joy; but for all that I shall never be at rest, unless my Saints on Earth be full of joy also, and for that very end I speak these things here at my departure, and press thee thus earnestly in their behalf for those things which their hearts most desire, and which are most necessary for them, that it might conduce somewhat that way, namely to the filling of their hearts with joy when I am gone.

So likewise for *the other world*, he wisheth them the best thing there, *viZ. the full and perfect enjoyment of God.* It was his very design, and the very end for which he underwent all miseries in this world, to bring them near to God, even into his presence, that they might be filled with *all the fulness of God*, (as every thing, which is there, is,) and he will never leave till it

be done. This is that he hath undertaken to bring them to in eternal life, or this is that eternal life which he is fitting them for, and will not fail to bring them into, *viz.* the enjoying God in perfection, the perfect enjoying of a perfect God, to enjoy God as he himself doth, which is as much and as fully as he can be enjoyed: They must be *fellow-heirs*, have the same *inheritance* with him, the same *Kingdom*, the same *Crown*, the same *Life*, the same *Glory*, the same *Immortality*, punctually the very same inheritance, which inheritance is God, for he is *the sole portion of Christ and of all his people*. And then shall Christ see of the travel of his Soul and be satisfied in and concerning his seed, when he hath perfectly redeemed them, and layd them in the bosom of God, to suck in and enjoy all that is to be enjoyed there: when he hath fitted their hearts to receive God, even the fulness of God, and hath seen the fulness of God poured out into their hearts, and doth himself taste and enjoy it there. The Lord could never rest (in the way of his operation) till he had emptied himself fully into Christ, and Christ can never rest till he hath emptied himself with all that fulness into them, and till he hath brought them into himself, and through himself into God, and so both ways into all that fulness. And that God might take delight in them, and be as much with them, and do as much for them as is possible (in this time and day of separation and distance) he plants waters, and causeth to spring up in them the light, the life, the love of God, and whatsoever else God delights to be in and with, both to cherish with his presence, and to fill with his appearance, *Joh. 17.26.*

This is the first thing wherein the strength of Christs love discovers it self, *viz.* in wishing well to them: His desires

desires of their good and welfare are extended to the utmost degree, and therefore his love from whence they proceed must needs be very large.

2. The strength of Christs love appeareth further, *in his desire of union with them.* Every thing desireth union with what it loveth, according to the nature and degree of the love it bears: If therefore we would know how strong Christs love is, let us see what kind of desire of union there is in him.

Now his desire of union with them is as large as his well-wishes to them. He desireth the most perfect and compleat union with them that possibly can be, and as soon as may be. He would have the union present and growing, large and lasting.

Not to follow these heads particularly, consider how full an union he desires and the largeness of his desire but in these four respects.

1. He desireth to have them *with him*, to have them be where ever he is. If there were a person whom we could never endure to have out of our sight, but he must still be where we were, in the room with us, at board with us, in bed with us; if we could never abide to go any whither or do any thing without that person, every one (who saw this) would conclude there to be a great strength of affection in us towards that person. Why thus it is with Christ: Do the Father what he will for them, take he never so much care of them, &c. it will not serve Christs turn, it will not satisfie Christs heart, but they must be with him, in his Country, in his house, at his board, in his bed, they must walk up and down with him in the fulness of the Father. And this little momentany absence of his from them, it is meerly out of judgment, knowing it to be good both for him-

self and them, and for the glory of his Father ; but it is as much as his heart can do to bear it. And he profess- edly tells his Father it must not be so always, *Joh. 17. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, &c.* Did ye ever observe Christ to use such a manner of praying before, *Father, I will ?* as if he had said, If I would abate somewhat of my former petitions, and should be content that thou shouldst not preserve them from the evil of the world, but let them tumble a little in the mire, so that thou didst them good by it, Though I might like this well enough, yet this of their being with me I cannot, I will not : *Father, I will.* Thou hast made me a King, and this is my will and pleasure in reference to them, which I cannot vary from. I must have them with me ; I do so love them, that I cannot live long here without their company : My glory is no glory to me, unless they see and enjoy it with me. If therefore thou meanest to keep me in Heaven, thou must bring them up to Heaven, for I cannot, I will not live there without them.

2. It will not serve Christs turn to have them with him, but he must also have them *in him* : A strange kind of union. What we love we hug in our bosoms. Now as Christs love is more inward and intense then any other love, So he must have more inward expressions too, he must hug them in the inside of his bosom, They must be *in him* : He must have them within his very heart, to make much of them there. *Joh. 17. 21. That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* This desire, this request Christ putteth up for them all, he would have them all both in God and in himself. This is the thing he drives at concerning them, and this is the reason why he

he begs so much the care and protection of God over them, in the foregoing part of the Chapter, that they all may at length come to a perfect union in God and in him. Indeed the station of Beleevers here is in Christ, they are grafted into him, planted into him, seated in him, in him to abide, and in him to grow, as the branch is in the Vine: But this is not the perfect kind of union, or at least not perfect in its kind, they are not all thus in him, nor are any, that are but thus in him, perfectly in him. There is a sweeter, a fuller, a compleater being and abiding in him, which he longeth and prayeth for, to fill him, to be his fulness, to be all to him and suck all from him.

3. Nay thirdly, This will not serve his turn neither, but he must also be *in them*. They must be with him and in him, and he with them and in them. They must live in his Kingdom, in his Spirit, within his Life; and he must be, live, dwell, in their spirits, in their country. Now this is such an union as was never heard of, for one to be in that which is in him: But Christs love is a strange kind of love, and therefore may well produce a strange kind of union, even so strange as he that is not acquainted with this love cannot apprehend possible. For that to be the continent which is contained, to be in that which it doth contain in it self, how can this be? Yet the Scripture is expresse for it, *Joh. 17. 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.* And again, *Vers. 26. That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* He cannot be satisfied, only to have them lie in his heart (though that liketh him very well,) but he must also lie in their heart. He must have the same place in them, that he giveth them in himself. As he prepares a bosom for them, so he cannot

not be content unless he find a bosom in them. They must be *his house, his home, his Tabernacle, his dwelling, yea his resting place*, as he is theirs. *I in them*. No where must they be, but in Christ; no where will Christ be, but in them: He can be no where else, He can live no where else, He can rest no where else, He can enjoy himself no where else. What Christ is to God, we are to Christ; we come from him, and yet he cannot be without us: As we cannot live but in him, so he cannot live but in us; He doth not reckon his life as life, until he come to enjoy us. His life doth as it were wither while it is banished from us; it lives alone, it doth not bring forth fruit, nay it doth not enjoy it self: But when it cometh to be set up in us, then it will be life indeed, and then it will live indeed.

4. Neither will all this serve, but that nothing might draw him from them, and he might have full and only content in them, he must have *all of God* (all that ever he can need to look after or desire) *in them*. As he placeth all that they shall need or can desire of God, he placeth all this in himself, that they shall not need to seek for any thing out of him: So he placeth all that he can desire in them, that he may have no temptation to move his eye or spirit any further in the least. The fullest enjoyment of God that ever his heart shall meet with, he desires to have in them. That he may have no cause of stirring out from them, to seek any thing of God, he will have all of God in them. He doth as it were let go God, as he himself grew out of him, to cleave to God, as he (that is, God) groweth up in them. This is the great Mystery, the Mystery of that *spiritual affection* which is between *Christ* and the *Church*; They forsake God to enjoy one another; They can delight no where,

where, in nothing of God, but in one another. *Ephes. 5.*

31. *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.* This is a very mysterious thing: That a man should leave that tie and relation which is natural, to make up another which is artificial; That a man should loosen himself from that which is nearest to him, to unite himself to that which is far off from him; That a man should leave his own father who begat him, and his mother which bare him, and go cast all his love upon a wife which was a meer stranger to him. Yea saith the Apostle, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church, *This is a great Mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church, vers. 32.* There's a Mystery indeed, That Christ should leave his Father as it were, that no communion of Christ with his very Father will serve him but in his Church, that what ever sweetness God will give him to taste of, he must put it into his Church, and let him taste it there, that he is not satisfied with his Fathers house and presence in any other way of enjoyment but in his Spouse, and will leave it every other way, but as he can have it and enjoy it in her. This is wonderfully mysterious, and is a little shadowed out in that common relation between man and wife, where we find such a kind of passage as this is.

And this may be the reason why Christ desireth that the love of God may be in them, even that very love wherewith God had loved him, *Joh. 17. 26. That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* I would fain be in them, and yet I would lose nothing of thee by it, therefore I would have that very love wherewith thou hast loved me, be in them, that I may find it there. As God hath placed all his love in

Christ for us, and there we come to it: So Christ would have God place all his love in us for him, that he need not go any further then us for any thing of God. Christ knoweth that if he hath the love of God, he hath all; and that he would have in us, because he would constantly and perfectly be centred in us: Because he would be fixed there, he would have every thing there that his heart can desire, and that only is the love wherewith God loved him, which he was contented to part with, that he might take it up again.

This is the second thing wherein the strength of Christs love appears, *His desire of union*, which being so vast, what is the spring which nourisheth it?

3. The strength of Christs love appeareth yet further, *in his readinesse to do any thing for them*. Love is active, it is ever in doing for that it loves according to the degree of it. Now the greater and more constant this propensity is, the greater and stronger must that root of love needs be from whence it floweth. His readinesse to do for them appears in these three respects.

1. What ever excellency was in him which might do them good, he would put forth to the utmost: His wisdom, his strength, his love, or what ever else was precious in him, he never spared, when they had need of them. What ever he was able to do in himself, he was sure to do for them, when their need called for it.

2. What ever was *dear* to him, he would part with for them. He would let any thing go (though never so pleasant) which he himself enjoyed, if thereby he might advantage them. The glory he had with his Father before the world was, he layeth down for their sakes: His  
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dear life he counted not dear to him, when he was to part with it for their good.

3. He would and still will *venture* any thing for them, his choycest interest in God he hath and will hazard at any time to save them: When God is most angry, he is not backward to step in and desire him to sheathe his sword, for he must not strike them unless he strike through him first, which he knows he cannot, he will not do. Was it not a venturous thing for *Aaron*, when God was angry and executing vengeance, to run and *stand between the living and the dead*, to stop God in the course of his wrath, to beat it back as it were forcibly? yet *Aaron* was but a type of *Christ* herein, who doth the same thing more effectually and powerfully every day.

He that will thus lay out all, he that will thus lose and part with all, He that will not yet stick continually to venture what he hath received anew, hath certainly a stock of very rich love, and great store of it.

IV. For *the actings* of his love, wherein both the nature and strength of it will yet further appear, they are wonderful great and strange, and that if we consider them either in the varieties of his conditions, or in the varieties of their conditions, for he is still the same in both. How ever his state or heart was changed by the power of his condition, yet it was never changed towards them, when it most failed and fainted it remained in strength of love to them; and how ever they were changed either in themselves or towards him, yet it could produce no other alteration in him towards them, then such as proceeded from his love, and was profitable for them.

I. Look on him under the variety of his own conditions.

When he was in Heaven, long before this world was made, he fell in love with them there. The first sight his Father gave him of them ravished his heart. His love then acted three ways, or expressed it self in three things towards them.

1. In his desire to have them his wife. So soon as ever he saw them, *This is, saith he, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh,* This was taken out of me, this is part of my self, which must be again united to me, or I shall feel want. There is no helper to be found for me out of my self, and this is that meet helper in which my heart can alone find rest. He knew her, so soon as ever he beheld her, as the beloved of his Soul, and never did any more ardently or naturally seek room for his spirit in any thing, then he did for himself in her.

2. In undertaking all that God required thereto. He was content to serve for his wife, (*Jacob's* serving for his was but a type hereof.) He was content to purchase, to buy his wife, and that with no small price: And he was content to fight for her, after he had done it, he undertook to deal with all her enemies, *Sin, Devil, Death, Grave, Hell,* and redeem her from them all. He did so love her, that he was willing to take the hardest ways that could be to come by her, rather then go without her. His love would not suffer him to stand capitulating upon the terms, but so she may be his, he careth not what he undertake or undergo for her.

3. In his delighting in her then. He did not grumble at the price when he began to consider of it, he did not repent of the large offer he made for her, nor ever so much as said she cost me too dear, but it rejoyceth his heart to think on her, and the sight of her doth revive him more then the sight of the trouble, hardship and misery

misery that lies between him and her, and which he must necessarily pass through before he can enjoy her. *Prov. 8. 30, 31. Then was I by him, &c. rejoicing in the habitable part of his Earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.* This he did notwithstanding he was then in Heaven, drowned in glory there, and knew she was to be found by him in this miserable corrupted world, and in a most corrupt and miserable condition in it, yet the sight of his Spouse is of such vertue with him, that notwithstanding this disadvantage, it can administer joy and delight to him even in the midst of the fulness of the joys of Heaven.

Again, Look on him *when he came into this world.* Though he was to leave the glory of Heaven, after he had been so accustomed to the sweetness of it, yet he comes skipping into it, *Lo I come,* saith he; *hast thou prepared me a body?* I will not delay to take it up. And what made him so willing thereunto, but the strength of his love to them for whose sake he did it? *Thy Law is in the midst of my bowels;* what Law, but the Law of Love to his Father and to his Spouse? And his low and mean condition we never find troubling of him, nor any affliction he met with, his love to them so sweetened every thing he was to do for them. Yea that bitter cup at which he so startled when he took it, because of that terrible gall and wormwood wherewith it was filled, yet how did he long to drink it off for their sakes! *I have a Baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitned till it be accomplished!* Methinks my bowels are bound up, I do not seem to my self to have expressed love enough to my people, until I have done it.

And while he was present here, he bent himself to

give forth and leave behind him testimonies of his love to all posterity. He chose a company of Disciples to be patterns of his actings towards all his Saints, to the worlds end; who themselves were types of what his Saints would be, and his actings towards them were types of what he would act towards his Saints, which is not again to be done outwardly, but is continually done by him inwardly in and towards his. Now consider what these were, and how he behaved himself towards them. They were men full of *weakness*, full of *darkness*, full of *passions*, full of *pride*, often striving who should be greatest, expecting fleshly pomp and advantage by him, much failing in love to him, (what, *not watch with me one hour?*) in so much as they left him when he had most need of them, they hid themselves from him, they denied him, they feared a little reproach or danger for his sake, who feared nothing for theirs: And yet how tender was he of them continually, not upbraiding them for their unkindnesses, nor neglecting any act of kindness towards them. After his Resurrection he stayeth forty days from glory for their sakes, to satisfy them about his Resurrection, and his love to them, and to give them full instructions about the ordering of his Kingdom here on Earth, wherein their safety, peace and comfort lay.

And now he is in Heaven, he spends his whole time for them. He is taking up still there what belongs to them. He is keeping all surmises from the heart of God, and dashing all pleas which the Devil craftily and maliciously is still entering in against them. He is suing out warrants from God to have dayly bestowed upon them what grace can do for them for the best, according to their conditions: And he sends his best friend,

friend, the Spirit, out of his own bosom to bring him news how it fares with them, and to look to their hearts while they are in this world, and to be dayly working them up to blessedness. And, methinks, I hear Christ ever and anon renewing his charge, as he sends him; Go, look to my little ones, see they want nothing that thou canst do for them: See that they want no light in that dark world wherein they are: See they want no life in the midst of that dead world: See they want no comfort in the midst of those distresses, which it pleaseth my Father to exercise them with. Go and bear with their unkind actings towards thee, Consider where they are, consider what they are, consider what they suffer, and deal gently with them for my sake, and what affronts they put upon thee, or what injuries they offer thee, I will make up to thee, as I have already done unto my Father.

2. Look on the actings of his love towards them under the variety of their conditions.

First, In their unconverted estate, in that most loathsome estate wherein he findeth them lying, before he bringeth them home to God: His heart doth not then loath them, but is pitying them, and contriving how he may bring them home with most advantage; Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, Job. 10. 16. He shews where his heart was, when he said little, namely upon his sheep, his lost sheep, his scattered sheep, about bringing them into the fold where they may be safe and at rest.

2<sup>dly</sup>. In their converted estate, and their several turns and changes there. In all their sicknesses, in all their relapses, in all the miseries which befall them by their own folly, in all their sinful actings against God, in all their unkind actings towards him, in the midst (which goeth most

most to his heart ) of their *grieving of his holy Spirit*, when they are stubborn and rebellious, and act most unthankfully, when they will not trust him, nor by no means be perswaded of the love he beareth towards them, but are interpreting that ill which he intended well, striving against all the good which he is doing them, and doing that most eagerly which his Soul most abhorreth in them, yet then, even then is he doing for them the best offices of love which possibly can be done. As they then most need the care, love and tenderness of Christ, so he will be sure then to lay it out for them. And when at any time he worketh in them, by his own Spirit, what is pleasing in his eyes, he attributeth it to them, and accepteth it from them, as if it were their own. Indeed they do nothing, not so much as think a good thought of themselves, but he doth all in them, and yet he attributeth all to them. If he put it into their hearts, and enable them to feed or clothe any of his, he setteth it upon their account, and upon an high account too, even as their feeding and clothing of him. He thinks no ill of them, he interprets every thing in the best kind concerning them, He loves them so as nothing in them or from them can mitigate his affection to them, or hinder him from doing the utmost he can for their good, He takes occasion from all their unloveliness to stir up his heart to acts of love towards them suitable to that their state, but never to decline thereby from them, Here is love indeed. It would be too tedious to instance in the several acts in the several kinds of it, as in *pity*, in *care*, in *bounty*, in *delight*, &c. wherein the high and noble strain of his love doth on every occasion put forth it self, Let it suffice therefore to have given a little touch at it.

V. For *the manner* of his acting love, Love acteth in him this fourfold way, or he performeth the acts of love after this fourfold manner, *Primarily, Purely, Suitably, and Fervently.*

1. *Primarily*, He is first in love, and first in every act of love. What he speaketh of that one act of love, *viz. of Election*, Joh. 15. 16. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*, he was first in it, is true of every act else. He doth not stay for acts of love from us, before he performeth acts of love to us, but *we love him because he loved us first*, and we perform acts of love to him, because we first learned them of him. As Christ learned his love of the Father, so we learn our love of Christ. Yea before we can perform any act of love to him, there must several acts of love go forth from him towards us: he must both give us the grace, and quicken it, and draw it forth whensoever we act any thing with affection towards him. They are not our prayers that move him, but his love is before them, (and yet what can move him more?) but it is his love, the spirit of his love from and according to his love, that teacheth, guideth and enableth us to pray.

2. *Purely*, not with by-ams or by-ends concerning himself, but as he loves with pure affection, so he loves in a pure manner. As his love is spiritual love, so it acts spiritually, it hath no by-ends, no by-ways, but all its motions are like it self. Its purity discovereth it self in these three respects.

1. It will do nothing to dishonour God through love to them. Though Christ love them unspeakably, exceedingly desiring their happiness and his enjoyment of them, yet he will not intrench upon God in the least, in effecting of it. *Lo I come, I delight to do thy will, O my*

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God. And again, *I do always the things which please him.* And when he speaks of having finished his course, *Joh. 17. I have glorified thy Name*, saith he. Though he was always full of affection of strength to them, and did every thing in great love to them, yet it never carried him aside from the honour of his Fathers Name.

2. It will neglect nothing that may be for their good, though it never so much offend them. If they want a *chiding*, if they want *reproof*, if they want *rods*, yea if they want *scorpions*, they shall have them: And if they grow froward and cry out, Christ doth not love me, for if he did he could not thus deal with me, all this shall not save them, but he will lash and sting them so much the more, not out of ill will or passion, but because the condition of their froward spirits requireth so much the more, which cannot (as the state stands) be abated without prejudice. Christ doth not love them with a doting love, to let them see nothing but what they will call acts of love, but he will do that which he knoweth to be an act of love, how ever they interpret it.

3. It will do nothing which may be for their hurt. Though they are apt to nourish humors, yet Christ will never be drawn, through his love to them, to nourish those humors. Hence it is that the Soul though it beg never so hard for some one mercy, and that a spiritual mercy, using all its interest in Christ to obtain it, yet (in some cases) it can by no means come neer it, but the mercy doth as it were run the further from him, by how much the more he seeketh it. This proceedeth from the purity of the love of Christ, who knoweth what condition they are in, and how ill this mercy would suit them in their present condition. Perhaps it  
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would feed some lusts (whereof they are not aware) which stand ready to prey upon it, and fatten themselves with it, so soon as it should be given in: Perhaps it would lift them up in their own thoughts, and so (either that or some other way) interrupt their naked dependance upon God, and any such evil consequence (which they may not fear, but suppose that the mercy it self might preserve them from) would do them more harm, then the enjoyment of the mercy could do them good.

3. *Suitably.* Christ puts forth such acts of love and so, as their need requireth. Sometimes he putteth forth acts of pity, sometimes acts of help, sometimes acts of delight: Not all at all times, but what our present estate and every thing considered together doth call for. The not understanding of this causeth Christians so often to question the love of Christ towards them: If he be not continually putting forth acts of delight in them, and giving testimonies of sweetness to them, they are apt to think that his love at least declines; whereas there are heart-workings of love in Christ which they cannot perceive (but only know by faith that they must needs be) nor is it fit that they should perceive them, in the condition that they sometimes are in: But as Christ hath revealed his love to be ever constant and strong to them, so they should ever beleeve it to be so; and it is the glory of faith so to judg of it, when as nothing of it appears in the view of sense. To what end hath God given them faith, if they notwithstanding esteem of things by and according to sense? But what ever condition they are in, though Christs love may not discover it self to them in the way they expect and desire, yet it always goeth forth in the most suitable way. *In*

*all their miseries he is not only pitying them, but bearing them company ; He bears their burdens with them, he helps them, he supports them, he contrives and prosecutes their rescue and redemption ; and if he may not do it openly, yet he will not fail to do it effectually, though secretly and unseen by them. What ever their distress be, whether outward or inward, whether by sin from within, or by affliction from without, even when they have caught a grievous fall by their own folly and head-strongness, yet even then is he mourning over them, and considering how he may raise them up again with most advantage. Rejoyce not against me, O mine enemy, though I fall, I shall rise again.* In our lowest ebb he is certainly thus with us, doing this for us, though we cannot possibly imagine ; *Nevertheless I am still with thee, thou holdest me by my right hand,* said the Spirit of Christ in *David*, when he had seemed to himself neglected and removed from the care and love of God beyond the common sort of the world. *In their weaknesses* he is still condescending to them, he bears with all their infirmities, yea he apologizeth for them in his own heart, *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak :* He considereth both what frail flesh they are, and what a strong body of corruption hangeth about them in this their weak estate. *When ever they do well,* he is delighting in them : A father will not stroke or be pleasant with his child when he behaveth himself unwardly, Christ knoweth it is unfit to express delight in them then, Therefore Christ telleth his Disciples in the 10 verse of this 15 Chapter of *John*, that if they kept his Commandments they should abide in his love, that is (in part) in the sensible expressions of it, they should find him delighting in them, vers. 11.

4. *Fervently*, He performeth every act of love in a warm manner; He burneth, his heart boileth in every act of love. As his love is strong, so he performeth every act of love with the strength of it. His bowels yern and roul within him, when he pities. He helpeth with all his might: He vehemently gaspeth after union with them, and enjoyment of them: He delighteth in them with his whole heart and with all his Soul, His heart leapeth within him in acts of delight; He never expresseth more to them then is in his heart, nay he never expresseth so much, he letteth them only see what is profitable for them to see. This is the manner of the acting of Christs love. And thus we see the love of Christ, after a sort, in a weak dark manner, opened.

Behold then the Rule ye are to set before you, the Copy which ye are to write after in loving one another. Thus hath Christ loved his, and thus are they who are Christs to love one another, which to imprint the better I shall a little briefly recite, as

1. With a love of this nature; not with carnal love, but with spiritual love; not with the love of your own old nature, but with the love of the new nature; not with your own natural affection which ye have from *Adam*, but with that new affection which God hath given you from and in Christ.

2. Upon such grounds. Not for the loveliness of their persons, the sweetness of their disposition and carriage, or their kindness to you or yours, &c. Alas, these are too carnal grounds for that love, which is truly spiritual, to move upon: These may move your natural affections, (and those indeed such kind of things as these should move,) but the love, which is here called for, is spiritual, and so must the grounds be, even

such as Christs own love moveth upon, as

*The Fathers love to them, and Christs love to them.* If thou partakeſt of the divine nature, and haſt the ſame love with the Father and with Chriſt, let it follow them in acting. Love what they love, and love becauſe they love.

*The Fathers will and Christs will,* that thou ſhouldeſt love them. Let that Will which is the Former of thy love be the guide and ground of thy love.

*Their relation to the Father and to Chriſt,* yea and to thee too in the Spirit and Body of Chriſt. As thy love is ſpiritual, ſo thou mayeſt find it upon thy ſpiritual relation.

*Their likenesſ to the Father and to Chriſt,* yea and to thy ſelf too in that which is beſt in thee.

If thy love be not ſpiritual, and faſtened upon ſpiritual grounds, it will not laſt. If thou loveſt them for ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, nay for the gifts of God which appear in them; when theſe ſhall at any time fail, thy love wanting its ground-work, will alſo fail: but if it be well-founded, it will then be as firm and as full as ever, when all ſuch conſiderations and motives ſink from under it. O take heed of loving Saints for gifts, not for meer grace; or for the outward lively actings of grace, not for the inward ſubſtance of grace in their hearts.

3. With ſuch ſtrength of love. Come as neer the degree of Christs love towards them, as thou canſt. Let thy well-wiſhes be large towards them, (be ever praying for them,) thy deſire of union and communion with them ſtrong, thy readineſs to do them good (even to the laying down of thy life for them) great.

4. Let the actings of thy love remain vigorous towards

wards them in all the varieties of thy conditions, and in all the varieties of their conditions. We are very unlike Christ in this respect, Our own conditions seldom change, our brethrens conditions seldom change, but our love varieth towards them.

5. Love in such a manner as Christ did. *Be first in love*; Aim at a precedency in all the acts of love, who shall first pity, and who shall first pardon, &c. Do not stay for the workings of their affections to measure or let out thine by, (this is a rule corrupt nature hath set up, not grace,) but kindle and inflame theirs by thine.

And be sure to love *purely*. *Love one another with a pure heart*. Never dishonor God, never do any thing which may hurt them, by any act of love. Never forbear doing them good for fear of crossing them. Cross them as much as thou wilt, so thou manage it with wisdom and tenderness proportionable for their good. Let all thy oppositions against them appear to be the oppositions of love, formed by love, brought forth with love, and only continued in love. Sweet and wholesom are those wounds which love measures out.

And act love *suitably*. When they are in distress, pity them: When thou seest them heavy loaden, help to bear their burden with them, *Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ*, (this is a great part of the Law of this Love, which is Christs Law, which is his Commandment, the bearing of one anothers weights and pressures, whether of sin or sorrow.) Wherein they are over-layd bear for them, wherein they are weak bear with them, condescend to their low-ness, to their shallowness, in the things of God; what

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is above their strength do not admit them unto by no means, how angry soever they may be thereupon; *him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations*, not to the judging and discerning of such things as require a greater strength of eye-sight then is dispensed to him. Where thou seest their hearts act plainly towards God, express delight in them, but take heed of manifesting delight in them when they are stubborn to Christ: for thou art not left at liberty to act love to them as thou shalt think good, but in a way suitable to their conditions. When thou seest the flesh prevail in them, thou must warn and check them, and complain to the Church of them if need be. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him*, Levit. 19. 17. So when thy brother offends thee, thou art first to tell him of his fault between him and thee, then to take two or three with thee, and at last to acquaint the Church with it, Mat. 18. This is not to be done simply to get thy self righted, but rather in love to thy brother, for the good of whose Soul (as well as for the peace and safety of the Church) this Ordinance is appointed. But there is a vast difference between these things being done from the truth and purity of love, and from a fleshly selfish spirit, the one seeking its brother, the other it self in these things.

Act love also *fervently*. Let love burn within, and let all the motions and operations of it come forth boiling hot. Pity fervently, pray fervently for them, put forth thy helping hand with ardency of affection. Let there be such an heat in the spirit as may cause the whole course of love sweetly and warmly to flow from the new nature, that the motions and operations of it may  
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not come unkindly and coldly forced out of the old nature. *Is any afflicted, and I burn not? saith Paul: and how was he in travel again with the Galatians? Love one another with a pure heart, fervently.*

Lastly, Be sure thou let nothing in or from them mitigate thine affections towards them. It may mitigate thy expressions in some kinds, but it may not dull thine affections, but whet and sharpen them to fit them for that which is now proper for them. Though thy brother trespass against thee, thou must not be provoked by him, but forgive him till seventy times seven times. Seventy times seven times trespass of thy brother against thee, must not put thee out of a forgiving temper towards him, but thou must be as ready, nay more ready to forgive, then he can be prone to offend. Thou must not say 'tis carelessness or obstinacy in him, or he might have avoyded it if he would, no not at his seventy seventh time of his trespassing against thee, but thou shouldst be as ready to forgive him as thou wast or couldst be the first time. We should not be murmuring against any miscarriages of our brethren, but bless God who hath taught us and given us grace to pity them, to pray for them, and to be otherwise sweetly and meekly helpful to them in love, towards raising and restoring of them. And thus the first Question is dispatched, *How Christ loveth the Saints?* The second is now to ensue, which is,

*Why the heart of Christ is so much in this thing?* why of all Commandments Christ picketh out this Command as his, and driveth it home in such a forcible manner upon them, as here he doth?

*Ans.* It is not for nothing, or upon no consideration that the Spirit of Christ is thus earnest, for there is a

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weight in the spirit of the thing which draweth him. The practise of this is of mighty concernment in this dispensation of life, which God is pleased to minister by him, and that both in respect of God, and in respect of the duty it self.

*In respect of God.* There are some considerations in reference to him, which cannot but incline Christs heart very much unto it; as,

1. Christs heart is set so much upon this thing, because the heart of God is so much in it. Christ came but as Gods Minister, and gave Commandments in Gods Name; The words which he spake, and the commands which he gave, were *not his own* primarily, but *his that sent him*, as he often saith. Now the Apostle (who lay in Christs bosom, and was continually searching into his heart, and learning the mind of God there) expressly telleth us, that this is Gods Commandment. *This is his Commandment, that we should beleeve on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment,* 1 Joh. 3. 23. There were two things which Christ especially applyed himself unto; first to bring men to beleeve on him, and afterwards to love one another, and the reason was, because these were the especial things which God required. They were first Gods chief Commandments, and then Christs chief Commandments.

2. Because it is so much for the honour of God. To have his children, his family full of love, living in love, acting love in strength one towards another, is greatly for his honour. It is a dishonour to a Master of a family to have his servants quarrelling, and his children falling out. It doth not become the God of Love to have his children destitute of or short in love, especially one among

mong another. Hatred becometh the Devil and the men of this world, but it is a dishonour to God to have it found in his children towards one another. Christ came with love, and Christ came to give and teach love, and it is an honourable badge of them who are taught by him to know God and his Gospel: It is an honour to them, an honour to him who hath thus dignified and qualified them.

*In respect of the duty it self.* There are some considerations there too, which were great attractives in the eye and to the heart of Christ, to move him vehemently to desire it in them, and so strictly to enjoin it to them, as namely, Its *excellency* in its own nature, its *comlineſſ* in them, and its *profitableneſſ* both to them and others. Christ loving them so much, cannot but much desire to find in them, that which is exceeding excellent, that which is so wondrous comely, and that which cannot but be so richly profitable whereſoever it is.

1. It is a duty of a most *excellent* nature. Love is the most excellent of all graces, (the Apostle ranks it in the first place of the most choyce graces, the greatest whereof he affirmeth to be love, 1 Cor. 13. 13.) therefore the *actings* of love must needs be the most excellent of all *actings*. That grace which is of the most excellent nature, and which hath the strongest influence into all the work we are to do for God, is love; and answerably the *actings* of love have the most noble and lively operations in them. It is both the most quickening and most mortifying grace, having least of self, most of God in it. Faith goeth out much for self (for its own safety and salvation, for the supply of its own wants) but love always for another. And in loving one another, the clearest, purest and excellentest acts of love

do shoot forth; because there often appeareth that in this object which would take away or at least stop love in its current, if it were not very clear, pure and excellent. There are always *infirmities* there at least, if not *corruptions*, and perhaps unkind actings towards us also, which have too too much influence upon the best in damping their love. God is such an object of love, that even the eye of Nature seeth loveliness in him, and call-eth for love towards him, and that so strongly, that it hideth the natural enmity that is in men against him from their own eyes, in so much as they think they love him, and cannot but love him, though in truth they hate him: but as for the Saints, there are abundance of unlovely things in them, hardly any thing lovely but the grace of Christ, and commonly that also covered with much unloveliness.

There is likewise usually that in this object of love, which most setteth off the actings of faith. What is it most commends the actings of faith, but its duration and activity in the midst of that which is contrary and dangerous to it? As when God distresth the Soul, appearing as an enemy, seeming even to kill faith it self, taking away all visible ground of hope in him, for faith now to continue, yea and act still in strength, exceedingly commends the virtue and excellency of its nature. Why love hath this tryal very frequently, It hath still almost somewhat of other in the Saints, to slacken it, if not quite to eat it out; much unloveliness of their own appearing amidst a little loveliness of grace, yea and perhaps that little grace hid too, and nothing but corruption visible: So that love towards this object thus held on, is an excellent duty indeed.

2. It is a *comely* duty. *O how comely is it for brethren*

*to live together in unity*, to love and cherish one another ! There are two things which much adorn Religion, obedience to God, and love to our brethren. It is an uncomely thing to see men fall out because they are of one nature, which is a strong bond of agreement, yea stronger and more extensive then is in the rest of the creatures : but O how uncomely is it to see Saints fall out, who meet in the bonds of so excellent a nature as theirs is ! To see the world hate them, and make a prey of them, is no more wonder, then to see a Wolf persecute and prey upon a Lamb : yet if they were of the world, the world would love them ; *If ye were of the world, the world would love its own*, Joh. 15. 19. It is such a piece of uncomeliness as the world is ashamed to be guilty of, not to love its own ; do ye not see every thing, throughout the world, tender of its own ? how much more uncomely is it for you, who have a closer union then this world knoweth of, to hate one another !

Every nature hath a love proportionable suited to it, which is comely, and the contrary whereof is uncomely. This is the most excellent nature, and therefore hath the highest love suited to it, and the greatest comeliness attends it, and the contrary thereunto must needs be most uncomely. *O how comely is it for brethren to live together in unity* : for Jews, for true Jews, who are brethren in Christ, to live together in the union and love of Christ ; who can express how comely, how sweet, how pleasant it is ?

3. It is a *profitable* duty. As it is of the most excellent nature of all graces, so it is the most profitable, bringing forth fruit answerable to the excellency of its nature. It is profitable to others, It is profitable to themselves.

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It is profitable to others, and that to all sorts of men whatsoever, whether a friend or an enemy, whether in an unconverted estate, or in what condition soever being converted.

1. To men in an unconverted estate. There is a double profit may arise unto them from the actings of love.

1. It will make them take more notice of Christ and of his ways. This kind of love exercised among the Saints, will make the world begin to perceive that their life is more sublime and weighty, then the life which is in the world is: it will help to convince them and force them to see what their eyes are shut against, namely the reality of the life and power of Christ, and the truth of their relation to him. *By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another, Joh. 13. 35.*

2. If exercised towards the world (as it cannot but break forth that way also) it cannot but melt them. Harsh ways harden, but sweet ways melt. Passion breaking forth seldom doth good, but acts of affection are very powerful. This is *an heaping coals of fire upon their head*, which will assuredly melt them at last, *Rom. 12. 20.* for none is able to stand before the enchantments of the truth and power of love. Yea this, the very worlds sight of the exercise of love of the brethren among themselves, may in a great degree produce, though not so fully as if it were exercised much and several ways towards the world it self.

2. To men in a converted estate. There is nothing more useful to them, in what condition soever they be, then love. What ever faith it self can do for them, love must quicken and give vent to, *Faith worketh by love.*

Love

Love, as it is generally serviceable and profitable, so especially to fellow-Saints, and to them it cannot but be profitable, what ever they be, where ever they be, how ever it be with them. Be they weak or strong, standing or falling, sweet or sullen in their spirits, any other way rightly tempered or distempered, how ever inclined or acted, love rightly going forth towards them, is very fit to do them good, which will easily appear if we consider these few properties in love.

1. It hath an *edifying* property. The great use both of offices and gifts in the Church, is the edification of the Church: but love is more profitable to edification then all gifts whatsoever. The Apostle setteth up prophesying above all other gifts in this respect, and yet layeth that also flat before love, 1 Cor. 13. We do not take a right course, so much to bewail the loss of gifts, we should first and chiefly bewail the loss of love. We might do well enough without gifts, if we had but love enough: but we could not possibly edifie without love, had we never so many gifts. They are not gifts simply, but grace which edifieth, which love is, whereas gifts are not so: And gifts when they do edifie must be subordinated under and ordered by grace. It is not thy gift, but the grace of Christ in thy brother, which maketh him edifie by thy gift. Therefore though thy gift be never so large, and never so well improved and employed, yet if the heart of thy brother be not in a gracious frame, he is not edified thereby. Yea further, it is not the learning more of the knowledg & mysteries of Christ (which is the proper end of gifts) but love which edifieth; A man may be swelled up by knowledg, but it is love whereby he both edifieth and is edified, *Knowledg puffeth up, but love edifieth*. It is not simply the use  
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of a gift, but the gracious use of it, the use of it in love which edifieth, in so much as that a little delivered in a sweet gracious manner, will edifie much more then a great deal delivered by vertue of a gift. Gifts without grace dispose us rather to slight and cast off persons, then to take that pains which is necessary to edification, the will whereunto, and skill wherein, only love hath.

2. It hath an *assisting* property. Love is ever ready to aid and assist. Love will set its shoulder to every burden, lend its hand to every work. What is there, or can there be to be done, which love will not help to do ?

3. It hath an *encouraging and strengthening* property. Love delighteth to be encouraging and strengthening the faint and the weak. Weak Saints may make much use of a Soul, where there is much love. Thus Christ taught *Peter* by the exercise of his own love to him, *When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren.*

4. It hath a *recovering* property. What made God recover sinners, but his love ? Had he not loved them, he would have let them lie for ever in their lost estate : And he who hath the same love in him, cannot rest till he hath raised and restored his fallen brother. Into what traveling pangs did love put *Paul* in for the *Galatians*, towards the recovery of them ?

5. It hath a *communicative* property, and that in a sweet distilling way. Love is ever communicative ; it will reserve nothing, but impart every thing. God loving his, can withhold nothing from them. This maketh love so edifying, because it cannot but impart whatsoever it hath that may tend to edification, or to the good of another in any kind. And it doth not barely impart,  
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but in the sweetest way : It doth distill and drop into another, making insensible impressions, stealing into the heart and overcoming it before the party is aware. Love hath every property suitable to communicativeness, and to a sweet way of communication, as in the Apostles description of it, in 1 Cor. 13. may easily be Thus useful and profitable to others, is love.

And it is also profitable unto themselves. The practise of this duty of love to the brethren, is very profitable to them in whom it is, and from whom it issueth, which may evidently appear in these several particulars following.

1. It will teach them to love both God and Christ in the fullest manner. Our happiness consisteth in loving of God : The knowledg of God is but a means to make us love him : It is not either Gods bare knowing of us, or our bare knowing of him, which most advantageth or satisfieth either, but the meeting of our affections together, which all the discoveries and knowledg of each other do but make way for. And there would be no want of any thing to us, were there not want of love in us : There is life enough in God, and were there but love enough in us, we could not but draw out and take in enough of it. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live, Deut. 30. 6.* There would be no want of spiritual life in us, or of the motions of this life in and towards God, were there not a want of love unto him.

Now loving of the brethren will teach us to love God : both because there is that more abundantly in God which we love in them, and because in him it is

pure without that imperfection which attends and soils it in them. If we love the image though so full of spots, how can we chuse but love the substance, which is without any spots, much more? He that loveth him which begets, loveth that which is begotten: and by loving that which is begotten, he groweth more and more in love with that which did beget. The frequent practise of love towards that which is weak and imperfect, will advantage it both in skill and strength towards that which is perfect and compleatly able to receive and answer all the touches of it.

2. It will teach them to interpret things well from God. This one thing doth us most harm of any thing, our harsh interpretations of the good ways of God towards us. It is not only very unnatural and unkind in us, and most irksome to the heart of God, but it is also most prejudicial to us, for in a degree (so far as it goeth) it withdraweth our spirits from the fountain of our life and strength: It puts a stop to our spirits in our drawing of that, which at that time we most want.

Now love to the brethren will teach us otherwise: for this ever accompanieth love, namely, a good interpretation of the actions of those we love. Let any one tell us of what an ill turn our friend hath done us; Surely he did it not, saith Love; or If he did it, it was with no ill intent towards me; Though it hath proved ill, he intended it well: *Love thinketh no evil, 1 Cor. 13. 5. yea verſ. 7. It beleeueth all things, it hopeth all things.* Though sense and experience say otherwise, yet if faith or hope can put a good interpretation upon it, it will receive it; if it can but find any ground to beleeve otherwise, or to hope otherwise, it is glad of it: and it is a very hard case wherein there is room neither for faith

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nor hope. Love is very incredulous of any ill (though God continually found the Jews a lying generation, *whose heart was not right with him, neither were they ever stedfast in his Covenant*, yet his love made him upon all occasions say and think concerning them, *Surely they are children that will not lye*, *Isai. 63. 8.*) Where we are so apt to surmize or beleieve surmises, there must needs be great want of love.

But how doth this teach us to interpret things well of God? Why thus. A man that accustometh himself to interpret things well concerning his brother shall find very great benefit in it. He shall find himself delivered from many harsh and evil thoughts of his brother, which otherwise would attend him: He shall find many times how he had wronged his brother, if he had judged otherwise; and though his brother should prove faulty at length, yet it will be time enough to judg it so then. Why now, hath he not much more cause of interpreting things well from God? Cannot a man repent of interpreting things well of his brother, and shall he ever repent of interpreting things well of God? Besides, the practise of this duty towards his brother, will enforce him to observe it in the same degree at least, if not further, towards his God also. Shall a man not dare to beleieve any thing ill of his brother, until it evidently appear, and shall he judg his God so soon as Satan puts him upon it?

3. It will teach them to bear any thing from Gods hand. We shall have enough to bear from our brethren, and yet love will not refuse to bear, be it never so much: *Love beareth all things*, *1 Cor. 13. 7.* We shall never have that to bear from God, which we dayly meet with, and have reason to expect from our brethren.

thren. We have ground to expect from them unkind, froward, injurious actings towards us, besides their prejudicial actings to their own Souls, (which will wound no more then the former, if we be spiritual ; ) all which we must bear, and yet proceed on in every act of love towards them. We shall find none of these things in God, but only pure, wise actings for our good: And can a man bear the weakneses of men, and yet grumble at the wisdom of God ?

4. It will teach a man to look the better to his own heart: The observing and helping to cure the evils of other mens hearts, will teach us to espy and prevent the evils of our own. This is the great benefit which attends the practise of all the duties of love to the brethren, namely, that what we do but endeavor to do to them, we do to our selves insensibly : While we are teaching them, we are imprinting truths on our own hearts ; while we are watching over them, we are looking to our selves, &c. So that though others should reap no benefit by our care and pains, yet we our selves shall have no cause to repent of it.

5. It will make us very feelingly to admire the wonderful strength and vertue of the love of God, and that will be a very profitable thing to us : for as our stability, the certainty of our state, is in the love of God, by its laying hold of us, and comprehending us ; so our sweetness, our rest, our content, our satisfaction, is by beholding it, and reposing our selves in it. Now the practise of this duty of love to the brethren cannot chuse but very effectually work up the sight and admiration of this in us, when we shall continually see so many failings and loathsome things in our selves and in others ( as this will draw us to do, ) and yet God, not-  
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withstanding all these, so entirely, so fully, so constantly, so perfectly still loving us all.

6. It will make all duties, of one towards another, easie. Love is a quickening ingredient, which putteth life into the spirit, and maketh every thing light with which we have to do. What made *Jacobs* hard servitude so easie, but his love to *Rachel*? What made Christ so lightly trip through those intricate thorny paths through which he passed, but his entire love to his Saints? The weightiest service of love is easier then the largest liberty in the very kingdom of enmity. That which is a great load to a weak back, alas what is it to him who abounds with strength? Strength of love in the heart will put strength into the feet, into the arms, into the hands, into the shoulders, &c. so that every motion in every one of them will be easie and delightful. It is the setting about duties without love which makes them so heavy: How can that be done without love, which is only to be done with love! This is the great difference between our motions now adays, and the motions of the primitive Christians, theirs did issue from a Spring, we go about to force out ours with artificial engines: They had love kindled in them, and love drawn forth in them by vertue of the same life which kindled it; We reason love into our hearts, and reason out the practises of it, and alas how weak is this! But had we, of a truth, love enough (enough of that love) and the art of proportioning out love enough to every duty, we should fail in none, nor complain of any.

Thus exceedingly profitable to our selves is love exercised by us towards the brethren. (Where, by the way, we may take notice of the strength of Christs

love to us : It is love in him to us, which maketh him so strictly to lay this Commandment upon us of loving one another : He knew how useful it would be for us, and therefore in a more then ordinary manner he enjoyneth it unto us.)

And thus we see the Reason why Christ beareth so much on this subject, why his heart is so much in it, why he maketh it his Commandment : It is a thing which his Father much desireth, and is much for his Fathers honour : It is exceedingly useful to his Saints ; both them that practise it, and all to whom they practise it : and can you blame Christ in laying so much weight upon it ?

To propose now a little Application of all this.

Is the heart of Christ so much in this thing ? is this his especial Commandment, his peculiar Commandment, the Commandment of his choyce, which his Soul so thirsteth after to have observed by us, That we should love one another as he hath loved us ? Then,

1. What shall we say to our Lord Jesus Christ, when we come to stand before him and his Father, in the presence of all his Saints and Angels, for our so gross neglect of this duty ?

When this Law shall be read before us (*This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, &c.*) and the often pressings of it by Christ himself and by his Apostles throughout all the New Testament ; and when our hearts and actions shall be looked into, and so little of it found in either ?

When the Saints in the Apostles times shall rise up, and their hearts shall be opened, which were so full of love and entireness, that they could spend and be spent one for another ?

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When the Saints under the ten Persecutions shall arise, whose love is reported to have been so firm and large, that the very Persecutors themselves did bear witness unto it, and were amazed at it?

When the hearts of worldlings shall be ripped up, and stronger love appear there towards their fellow-worldlings, then in the Christians of this generation towards their fellow-Christians?

When men directly-wicked shall appear to have loved the image of the Devil better in one another, then we the image of God and of Christ?

Yea when our own hearts shall be ripped up, and the actings of our natural affection being made visible, it shall appear concerning our selves that we gave scope to that, but the new nature, and the powers of love in it, have been rather choaked in us, then drawn forth towards one another?

What shall we say in our own behalfs? We can blame one another very sorely now in cases of far inferior consequence, but how shall we answer this our selves before the Judge? We own the life of Christ in one another, but alas where is our love to that life! We say Christ is our Lord, why this is his great Commandment, that wherein his very heart and soul and spirit is, where is our obedience? who can answer this in his own spirit now? and if not now, how will he be able to acquit himself then, when the light shall be perfectly clear, and all the fig-leaves, wherewith we now so cunningly cover the evil of our hearts, ways, motions and actions from our own eyes, quite taken away, and made altogether unable from affording any shelter to us?

2. It may occasion an enquiry, why love should be  
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so barren, so dead among Christians? so backward in its growth, so prone to decay? That little life and virtue which it had among us once, where is it? I shall not prosecute this enquiry so far as it lieth open to me, but mention only these two causes from whence it may very well arise.

1. From a decay of grace in us, from our decay in love to Christ; or at least from the weakness of it, where it is not decayed. Were grace strong, were love to Christ strong, we could not chuse but love those that are Christs more. If we did not fail in love towards him who doth beget, we should better love those who are begotten by him.

2. From a carelessness in acting the duty. We are not careful to draw out a spiritual affection (and a natural affection will not do it,) and upon spiritual grounds, and with a spiritual fervency, and in a spiritual manner: but we go to love Saints, as we do other men. We do not simply love grace in them, There must be somewhat besides grace to draw forth and continue our affections, or else they warp. Our love goeth forth in flesh, and not to the pure life, but partly towards flesh, which it many times missing of, there presently groweth a faintness and decay of love. If love were more pure in us, and were drawn forth more purely from us towards its own pure object, it would be more lasting.

3. It speaks out a very strong Exhortation, of it self inviting and vehemently perswading Christians to press hard after this duty, and never to give their spirits rest till this duty be as much in their hearts and lives, as it is in the heart of Christ concerning them.

For the prosecution of this Exhortation, I shall propound

pound some few Motives to it, some Directions concerning it, and likewise some Helps towards it.

To begin with the Motives. Though all that hath been said be of a stirring attractive nature, yet it may not be amiss at last cast to drive in two or three nails again.

First then, Consider this well, that this is the way which Christ himself hath appointed us to express our love to him in. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*; and what Commandments? *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another. Peter, lovest thou me? feed my Lambs*: If thou lovest me, shew it, and if thou wilt shew it, shew it in thy love and care of my Lambs; what thou dost to them, thou dost to me. Our goodness cannot reach God or Christ, but the Saints, *Psal. 16. 2.*

2. Remember that this will yeeld unto Christ matter of joy in you. He rejoyceth in working this love in you, and he will rejoyce more in the continuance, growth and exercise of this love. *These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you*, saith he in the very next words to this Text, vers. 11. of the 15 Chapt. It will continually administer joy to the Spirit of Christ, to find love flourishing in you one to another.

3. Remember also that it will be an occasion of filling your own spirits with joy, so it is also expressed in that vers. 11. *These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* It is incredible what fulness of joy streams along in the sweetness of love: besides, it is the delight of Christ to fill his spirit with joy, whose spirit he hath already filled with love.

*Quest.* But how may I attain this duty? I find my spirit much inflamed with it, O that I might be a little guided to it.

*Ans.* If thou beest not better provided apply thy self to the observation of these few Directions.

1. Set this duty clearly before thine eyes. Consider well what kind of love it must be, upon what grounds it is to be fastened and carried on, in what degree, what must be the actings of it, and in what manner it is to act. Christians commonly do not understand what they do, when they buckle to this duty; nor how purely and firmly this affection must move, notwithstanding all manner of discouragements from them we love, which cannot but cause them much to falter in the performance of it.

2. Be working up thy heart to it dayly. Be working it up to a spiritual love, be working spiritual grounds into thy heart, that thy spirit may be engaged and move spiritually. Thou must be a kind of husbandman to the seed of the life of God in thee, thou must receive it, thou must cherish it, and thou must provoke it unto motion. This thou must be doing, though thou canst not do this nor any thing else that is spiritual. Wonderfully strange and mysterious is the operation of God in the Gospel: He works all in us of his own pleasure, and yet so as if we moved and wrought all our selves. The Lord lieth hidden in all the motions of our spirits, and by an unseen strength, vertue and influence doth all there, yea even that which we seem to do our selves; and yet we must up and be doing every thing, though we can do nothing.

3. Intreat God to write this Law in thy bowels. God wrote it in Christs heart, and he must also write it in thine,

thine, if ever it be found there. Therefore pray to God to write it there, and to write it there abundantly; that as he hath bid thee love all Saints, so he would give thee love large enough to go forth fully towards all Saints. We must be taught of God to love one another, if ever we learn this Lesson.

4. Intreat God to draw forth this love, when ever thou art to act it. If we see a thing to be duty, we presently set about it, and blame our hearts if they fall short in it. This we should do indeed, but we should also when this is done (or rather while this is in doing) go to God, in whom all our strength lies, to perform it in us. And this we might do at first, if we were but sensible enough of our own weaknels without a practical experiment; but therefore God puts us continually upon endeavoring our selves, because we forget how weak and unable we are to do any thing, any longer then we find it in our utmost strivings. Go therefore to God, who hath promised not only to *write his Law in our hearts*, but to *cause us to walk in his ways*. What ever way of God there is, God will not only write the Law of it in the hearts of his people, but he will make them walk in it. He will put such affections and strength into them, that they shall not be able to forbear walking therein.

*Quest.* But are there no Helps which may further me herein? Those which are skilfully practical know how to lead another into that path wherein they themselves have walked. If you have met with any knowledge or experience in this kind, O do not hide it from us, but help us a little in this track which is so auk and difficult to the spirit of man.

*Ans.* What I have found most beneficial unto and  
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powerful with my self herein, I shall very willingly impart unto you in whom this desire is kindled. Therefore from my own proof and experience I shall commend unto you these four Helps.

1. Would you love the Saints as Christ hath loved both them and you? Then, in the first place, Look upon them in Christ, and there thou shalt ever see them full objects for thy love. Thus God looketh upon us in our wretched estate (even in Christ) or he could never continue loving us. O how lovely are the Saints in Christ! They are imputatively perfect in him at present, (God reckons so, and why shouldst not thou reckon so?) and they shall be absolutely perfect ere long. They shall be made perfectly like Christ, and have all those spots taken away which now thou espiest in them, which are left upon them at present, not to make them unlovely in thine eyes, but for a design which God hath for his own glory, the good of all Saints, and thine in particular. If a pure spiritual eye were always thus fastened upon them, a pure spiritual heart would always love them.

2. Expect all manner of weakneses and imperfections in them. Look for distempers upon them, and all manner of evil breaking forth and taking its swinge in them, so far as God leaves them. Dost thou not find it so in thine own heart?

This is another means whereby God strengthens his heart in loving us. He expects no manner of good from us, but what he himself works in us: He expects all manner of evils and distempers which he himself doth not prevent. And all the evil that issueth forth, he attributeth not to us, but to sin that dwelleth in us. Why go thou and do likewise, and thou wilt love as God loveth.

*Paul*

*Paul* doth thus concerning himself. The good I would do I cannot, nor avoyd the evil which I would not do, but *what I hate that do I, oh wretched man, &c.* I can expect no good from my self, I can hinder no evil in my self: but yet 'tis not I, but sin that dwells in me. It is the unlovely part, that which I am to hate, not that which I am to love, which doth this.

There are two great faults in us. We do not labour enough to be holy our selves, and we expect it too much in others. If we did look for holiness more in our own hearts, and expect it less in others, this duty would be far easier then it is. But when we expect much, what ever falleth short of our expectation displeaseth us, and dampeth our affections.

3. Be ever stirring up their graces in them, and mark the workings of their graces in the midst of their distempers. This will still keep thine eye upon their loveliness at all times, and so will still draw forth love towards them.

1. Be ever stirring up their graces in them. Grace is the proper attractive of spiritual love, the sight whereof cannot but kindle it. Thus Christ makes the flowers and spices in his garden to yield their savour, and then falls in love with their scent. We think it is the duty of others to give forth their light and discover their graces to us; but we are apt to forget that it is also our duty to be drawing forth their light, and stirring up their graces. This was *Pauls* practise (that great Lover of the Saints,) *Rom. I. 11, & 12. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end you may be established. That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.* This was his design and course when ever he came among Saints, to

see what grace they had in them, to search out and stir up grace, that he might draw forth his own love in enjoying of them, in delighting in them, and in adding somewhat to them suitable to their state and condition.

2. Observe the workings of their graces in the midst of their distempers. We are usually exceedingly faulty in this: We never consider the distempers in Christians, but look they should always act as if they were in a right temper, (though we expect they should consider our distempers.) And then in their distempers we mark the stirrings of their corruptions, but though grace strive and help much to the keeping of them down, we take little notice of that. Whereas God considers the least distempers in us, and cherisheth and is delighted with the least motions of grace in us in our distempers. If it were otherwise, what would become of us?

4. Consider thine own weaknesses and sins. Doth any evil befall thy brother which thou canst avoyd? Doth thy brother neglect any good which thou canst do? He hath fallen into this or that evil; who hath kept thy heart? How long wilt thou keep out of the same evil into which thy brother is fallen, if God leave thee to the same temptation? Consider therefore the breakings forth of thine own heart in sin, where God doth suffer it; and how far it would break forth if God did not hinder it. And take heed of murmuring against thy brother as one that falls into sins, breeds troubles, hinders mercies, interrupts the sweetness of communion, &c.

There is a very notable place to this purpose, *Jam. 5.9. Groan not one against another, Brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold the Judge standeth before the door.* Our spirits will be very apt to groan one against another, O such

such an one hath hindred much good, if it had not been for him things might have gone well. Take heed, the Judg stands at the door, who will come and rip open thy heart and thy ways, and shew thee somewhat which thou little thoughtst of, and so thou who groanest against another wilt be condemned thy self. Nay *though thou hast spoken to them in the Name of the Lord*, (as he carrieth it, vers. 10.) and they may seem to have despised thy message, nay have really both despised thee and the Lord in whose Name thou hast spoken; yet take heed of so much as groaning against them, lest the Judg also find matter against thee. It is not fit for one guilty person to breathe out complaints against another.

Therefore consider thine own heart well, and observe the failings there; Are there not more there then in thy brothers, all things considered? And consider if thou wouldst be willing to have Christ withdraw his heart from thee, or whether thou wouldst have him take occasion hereby to exercise towards thee such acts of love as thy need now requires, as to pity thee, to stand ready to help thee, to take that course which may best help thee, &c. If so, go and do so to thy brother. If thou wouldst have him keep that Law of Love which God hath given him concerning thee, do thou by his strength improve his grace to the keeping of that Law of Love which he hath given thee concerning thy fellow-Saints: *and this is his Commandment, that we love one another as he hath loved us.*

Now for a close, that he that readeth may understand.

*All this is but an exercise by way of Discipline to the seed in its childhood, as indeed all other things also are. The threat-*

threatnings, the rewards, the promises, the comforts, the enjoyments, &c. in every dispensation, are suited to the state of the child.

When the day dawns, the shadows will fly away: When Truth appears, that which did represent it, as an image of it, must give place.

Yet these images or representations are not such as either Satan or the mind of man frames, which are vanity and a lye, but true and substantial representations of Truth.

But though they are truth in their kind, yet they must not stand for ever, but only their appointed season, which is till Truth of a deeper kind come, or at least till the night before the day of Truths discovery.

It were good for every one that he knew his dispensation, and what is proper for him in it, that he might both bear the yoke and enjoy the sweetness of it, not leaping out of it before he be led. This over-much haste will cost him dear, for all the ground he treads after this rate, he must traverse back again, before he can come to that forwardness wherein he was, even under that dispensation out of which he thus slightly passed.

There is a true death in and to a dispensation, which there is no redemption from: There is no more life to be had in or under that dispensation by him whom God hath truly slain in and unto it. But there are deadnesses in and under ministrations, which are not so much as degrees of this death, nay there are deaths also which are not this death, which the life in those that are under those ministrations is to recover out of, or they must suffer loss thereby.

In the most lively ministration among Christians, Love hath still been the life: and in that way wherein they yet are, these things may be useful. But yet there is a more excellent way, and more excellent things then are now thought of,

of, which will be manifested in due time. But it is very dangerous striving to ascend up to them aforehand, the sweetest and safest way is to wait the season of their descent. The deep sense of the want whereof, with an assured expectation and quiet waiting and groaning for, is the best strain of Religion, of the purest stamp of any I know extant. Life is now wrapped up, coming very little forth; yet most in these motions to the sense and judgment that I have of it.



## Some few Catechistical Questions concerning the way of Salvation by Christ.

Quest. **W**hat is the sum of the Gospel?

Ans. It containeth the news or tydings of one anointed by God to be a *Prince and Saviour* to his people, to redeem them from their sin, misery and captivity, into the happy freedom of true life.

Q. *How doth this Saviour save?*

A. By reconciling God and his people together by vertue of the *anointing*.

Q. *How came God and his people to be at odds?*

A. By their disobedience to a Law set up between God and them (which was agreeable and assented unto by their own nature) the effects whereof severed them from God, and Gods own righteousness severed him from them; which disobedience of theirs (to his most righteous Law in it self, and most natural to them) though it could not root them out of the inmost of each

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others hearts, yet it raiseth a wall of enmity and separation on each hand to the utmost limits of that dispensation, wherein God and they are perfect haters one of another; They the objects of his wrath as much as any (*the children of wrath as well as others,*) and he as hateful unto them as unto others.

*Q. How doth Christ effect a reconciliation between them?*

*A.* By his mediation between God and them, the anointing fitting him, and he making use of the anointing to the utmost, to work both unto terms of hearty agreement. For he undertaketh to stand as a middle person between them, equal to each, proposing such terms whereon they may agree without prejudice or detriment on either side; and to ratifie and establish this agreement himself, so as they shall never have cause more of variance on either hand. He takes off the old occasion wholly, and will not suffer any new seeds of division to be sown, or any new occasion of difference to arise.

*Q. How can he possibly do this?*

*A.* He cannot miss of it the way that he takes, which is, by taking the whole work of each upon him (he being sufficiently furnished to do it, by the Law of Life in himself) that neither shall expect any thing from the other, but only from him, who as he is powerful, so he promiseth to be faithful unto each. God knowing his power and fidelity, is easily satisfied; and when he is a little acquainted with them (or rather they with him) he maketh them sensible thereof likewise, and faileth not of begetting confidence also in them.

*Q. What doth he undertake in reference to God?*

*A.* These two things.

1. To give him full satisfaction for the offence committed.

mitted. Let Justice cry with open mouth, it shall be filled, it shall have enough.

2. To fit them fully for him: To make them a fit Spouse, a fit Temple, a fit Habitation for his Life, Majesty and Holiness.

*Q. What satisfaction doth he give to God?*

*A.* He pays him in the coyn wherein he was robbed, and that very perfectly stamped, for he giveth him both active and passive obedience in every thing he calls for from him. He doth his Will and suffereth his Will as much and as long as he pleaseth. This he did all his life, and at last at his death gives him a full round sum of both, in sacrificing himself to his pleasure, which was both his act (for he gave himself, he gave up his life,) and his passion (for he suffered most deeply in it.)

*Q. How doth he fit them for God?*

*A.* Three ways.

1. By cleansing them from all their pollutions.

2. By filling them both within and without with all such riches, glory and beauty as is comely in the eye of God.

3. By turning their hearts towards God: for all manner of fitness without this will not make a match.

Now these though they be distinct works, yet they are done together. They are begun together, they are carried on together, they are perfected together.

*Q. But by what means doth Christ accomplish all this?*

*A.* By working repentance and faith in them, and by causing repentance and faith to grow up in them: for hereby he both changeth their natures, and transplanteth them; so that they are no more what they were, nor where they were; so that God cannot look upon them either as such as they were, or as in such a state as

they were in, for Christ (who is real in his operations) hath really changed them in both respects.

*Q. What is Repentance?*

*A.* It is the turning of the heart from sin, upon the sight of the evil and misery of it, shewn by Christ to the eye of the new nature. (Repentance is only the diversion from, the conversion to, is faith, or an act of faith.) He giveth them a sight of the evil of sin, of what a loathsome nature it is, how filthy and odious it maketh them in themselves and to every pure eye; as also of the misery of it, which is both present slavery and future condemnation and wrath: And hereby he turneth their hearts clean from it, that they desire nothing more then to be fairly rid of it.

*Q. What is Faith?*

*A.* It is a receiving of Christ into the understanding, into the heart, into the whole man; and a giving up of the understanding, heart and all unto Christ. It is a taking in and a giving it self up unto *the leaven of the Kingdom*. It is the Souls glue, given it by Christ, whereby it clings and fastens to Christ, and whereby it fastens Christ to it self.

(It is a very curious work, requiring very accurate skill, which Christ operateth between God and his people. He offereth force to neither, but dealeth with each suitable to their natures, and by his skill and power therein, worketh and bringeth both about.)

*Q. How doth Christ work repentance and faith in them?*

*A.* He bestows them upon them. He sendeth his *Word*, the Gospel of the Kingdom, by his Ministers, wherein or in which Vessel is this seed of Light, of Life, of Liberty, which he distills or drops into their understandings, and into their hearts, whereby (by the presence

sence of which, by the growth of which, by the influence and operation of which) he gaineth upon them.

*Q. What doth he undertake in reference to them?*

*A. Two things.*

1. To give them in the pardon of their sins from God, so that they shall find them washed off from their own Consciences, they shall feel him at peace with them. This was not an imaginary act of the Soul (as it is very much now adays) but a real act of God, really transacted by God upon the Soul, and really seen by the eye of the Soul, and truly felt in the heart and spirit.

2. Communion with God, both in such a degree as is needful for them at present, and in perfection of glory at last. They are sons now, heirs at present, having fellowship with God as his sons, as his heirs; but then, in the time of it, they shall enjoy their inheritance, which is reserved for them till they be grown up.

*Q. But may not God and they fall out afterwards as they did before, and so their end prove worse then their beginning?*

*A. No, for Christ undertaketh to preserve them, to keep them safe from all evils and dangers, in so much as they shall not fall upon them further then shall be for their good: to work in them and for them all their works: to keep off wrath, that it shall seize no further upon them, then he himself in wisdom and love seeth good to let it out. In a word: God shall never have more to say to them, but from him; nor they never have more to do with God, but through him, who loveth them perfectly, and who as he began, so he will continue meerly from the strength of his own love to perfect his own work in them, which though his wisdom may cause him to carry on very mysteriously, yet*

his love will not let him fail doing of it very safely.

*Q. What must he do who is instated in this Salvation, in and for whom this Redemption is begun by Jesus Christ?*

*A.* He must be continually sacrificing himself by the Spirit of the Lord (in which he that is in Christ lives and moves and acts) until he become an whole burnt-offering unto the Lord: until all his light, all his life, all his will be swallowed up and perfectly lost in the Light, in the Life, in the Will of the Lord. Not only until his corruption be dissolved and consumed, but till his very nature and being (in all the powers, motions and operations of it) be changed into the Nature and Being of the Lord: until the new creature hath wholly spread it self all over him, and he be become wholly a new lump. This, he who is not truly changed, cannot do; and he who is truly changed cannot but do.



### *A Postscript about Religion.*

**T**Here have always been *two kinds of Religions* in the world, (besides the several strains in each, and the several ways of jumbling each together, which the vain heart of man hath invented to entangle and vex it self withall,) The one *Heathenish* or *Devilish*, The other *Heavenly* or *Divine*; The one wrought out of the Earth by the assistance of Satan, The other let down into the Earth by the Spirit of the Lord.

The whole Earth is still taken up about *Religion*. It is both *natural* and *artificial*, and that about which the whole strength of Nature and Art is most employed.

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There hath not been any part of the Earth, so barbarous, wherein there have not been some strains of devotion found. There is every where (where the nature of man appears, where the art of man is exercised, and where there is any breath either of God or Satan stirring) some kind of seed, and some kind of culture of Religion.

The main end of Religion (in reference to us) is *Salvation*. Not only present relief and protection in our present feeble estate, but Salvation in a future estate, which the very nature of man pointeth him unto, and teacheth him to look after. We are at present involved in misery, we feel it: Every creature feeleth it according to its kind, and we according to our kind. There is some future estate of things unto which we all are passing: And this present estate, though it be wholly vain in reference to us, as we now are, yet it cannot be at all vain in reference to that; but that which is perfect must of necessity order every thing perfectly to its end, so that nothing be lost, not any one motion of any creature in any kind.

Now this is most evident, That though all men almost expect Salvation, yet the attainment of it will be very rare. The common paths of Heathenish Worship will not lead to it, and in the midst of the Dispensations of God there are few who truly walk to it. How few of the *Jews*, under the Dispensation of the Law, did truly walk towards Salvation! And how many *Disciples*, under the Gospel, ran so as they could not obtain! *Many shall say, Lord, Lord, open to us; but the Lord shall answer them, Verily I know you not.* They shall speak like persons well acquainted with the Lord, and very sure of entrance: but the Lord will disown them,

them, and tell them publickly, Of a truth I know you not.

Doth it not then behove every one to look about him? It is very ill trifling about Eternity. Thou wilt one day be ashamed, O confident Soul, who hast sought for *the treasure* in the wrong field; who hast layd out *thy money for that which is not bread*, and thy pains for that which will not satisfie. Wouldst thou but consider how unable thou art to justifie thy Religion now, I speak to the most strict, to the most exact persons living, I say, bring thy Religion to that touchstone which may now be held forth, how wilt thou manifest it to thine own spirit to be weighty! Thou *knowest*, thou *beleevest*, thou *lovest*, thou *obeyest*. Very good. But how wilt thou justifie any of these? I dare boldly affirm, that unless thou hast seen the stamp of God (with the eye of a true understanding, 1 *Job*. 5. 20.) thou canst not be able to say that these are of his stamp; and unless they be of the stamp of God, and have the very Nature and Life of God in them, I am sure they shall not save thee. Ah foolish man, Because thou hast lighted upon the Scriptures, and readest, and hearest, and prayest, and conformest thy life (as well as thou canst) to the directions thereof, yea prayest for the help of the Spirit, acknowledging thine own weakness and unprofitableness, &c. dost thou think to be saved? Dost thou not know that the *root* of all this is rejected by the Lord, and can any of the *fruit* be accepted? I can assure thee, the spirit of man will do this, and the spirit of man in thee may do this. (The Lord hath written this in the nature and present state of man, and when he pleaseth he may draw it out.) And seeing with God it is all one to will as to do, the spirit of man, which is universally willing unto this, shall

shall be as well accepted herein as thine. He who would have been wrought upon to do this, is as justifiable before God, as thou who hast been wrought upon, and hast done it: And thou who art *uncircumcised in heart* (for that which thou callest the circumcision is no more it, then that which the Jews called so) art as loathsome before God, as those who are uncircumcised in their outward practices and professions.

Let me plead a little further with thee. Dost thou know what the spirit of man can do, when his whole nature, when all his understanding, his affections, and passions are purified and heightened? It is a dull frothy stupified spirit, which can please it self in this drossy world, a spirit a little sublimated, a little enlightened, a little quickened, cannot but mind things of another nature, even such as are suitable to its inward part, and the future estate thereof: And what would not a natural spirit thoroughly sensible do, to avoyd its perfect misery, and attain its perfect life, rest and happiness?

Again, Dost thou know how near thou mayst approach to the Truth, and yet remain short of it? how far thou mayst walk in a way like *the strait way*, and yet it not prove the way? how high thou mayst ascend on the *ladder* (which seemingly to thee leads up to Heaven) and yet that not prove the ladder? There is no *Christ* can save but *the Lords anointed*, nor can he save any otherwise then by his anointing thee in the Name and with the Nature of the Lord; *He shall save because of the anointing*. Thou mayst have all the similitudes of Truth and Salvation in every kind, and yet not one spark of Truth in any kind. Thou mayst have light, great light, which thou mayst confidently beleeve to be *the light of the Lord*, and yet it may not prove so: Thou mayst

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have fresh and vigorous life, and yet not that life prove the life of the Spirit neither; And if so, then all the motions of this life, all thy steps in this light, will not lead thee towards, but further from the Lord. Thou mayst offer sacrifices, and yet those sacrifices not be the Lords, though in thine appearance instituted by him, and by thee dedicated to him: Thou mayst season them with salt, and offer them up with fire on that which thou takest to be the Lords altar, and yet neither that salt, that fire, nor that altar be the Lords. To come yet nearer, Thou mayst have faith in God through Christ, love to God and the Saints, peace in thine own spirit, rest and joy in beleeving and obeying the voyce of the Lord, and all these very pure and spiritual in thine own view, and yet not so before the Lord who knoweth things, and cannot be deceived with vain appearances. In a word, Thou mayst come *from a Land of bondage, through a wilderness, into a state and condition of rest*; and yet this may not be the child of the Lord whom he called out of Egypt (*out of Egypt have I called my Son,*) nor this Egypt the Egypt out of which he calleth his Son, nor this state of rest Gods Canaan, Gods holy Land unto which he leads his son. There are Egypts (states and places of bondage) for the spirit of man: There are wildernesses, thousands of wildernesses (as there were many wildernesses in the world besides that which Israel passed through) in which the spirit of man may be entangled, and through which he may travel, and after his passage through them may find a condition of rest. But yet the Lords Egypt, the Lords Wilderness, the Lords Canaan are different from these, as they are prepared for a different end, namely, the subjection, the correction and enlargement of his son.

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There is a threefold state of persons standing for life; There are three sorts of Runners, all which make account to obtain, but only one of them can.

1. There is *the pure extract of this Earth*, the natural man, him I mean (not whom thou art apt to call so, but he) who notwithstanding all his Religion (all his devotion, his reading the Scripture, his praying, hearing, beleaving, &c.) in the eye of God is so, and by his tryal will be found so. This man, though he be very zealous, yet he hath no more Religion in him, then the spirit of man, by serious consideration with himself, and by solid meditations on the Scriptures, may attain to. This man, finding a necessity of beleaving, and just ground for it, cannot but beleave, cannot but love, cannot but strive after obedience, in the midst of all incumbrances and hangings back; his spirit, thus lighted, convinceth, persuadeth, and thus directeth him. This man makes no question of acceptance here, and of enjoying God hereafter. Of this sort is the greatest part of Religious persons upon the face of the Earth, though because the spirit of man is more enlightened and heightened in some then in others, therefore some are apt exceedingly to justify themselves and condemn others; calling the Religion of others formal and earthly, little suspecting that their own is so, not only in its most sublime outgoings, but even in its very root.

2. There is *an heavenly kind of birth*, from an heavenly gift, from a gift of a new life as it were, from a light let from God into the Soul, which shining about it and quickening it, which shewing it the world to come, and letting in the powers of it, must needs make great changes in it, and beget an higher faith, love and obedience then the former. These make no question

but that *theirs is the Kingdom*, and yet these may fall away and miss of it, as is testified *Heb. 6.* and what if they had kept their standing, can a nature subject to change inherit Eternity? In rewards appertaining to Dispensations there may be loss or gain, but in eternal life there comes in no consideration of the motions of the creature, but it is *the free gift of God through Jesus Christ*, which he that well understandeth can unfold many riddles, wherein the spirit of man must needs be entangled and lost.

3. There is *a birth from a new nature*, from the life of God sown and springing up in the Soul, which seed contains in it and brings forth faith and love, and every other spiritual thing, *Joh. 1. 12, 13.* This man is not changed either by outward Reason or inward impressions from Nature or Scriptures, or by a gift of light let into his spirit, but by the true Nature of God shed into him, and swallowing him up into it, and bringing him forth anew in it. This is the only change, (for all other changes will return again to their principles:) The others make real changes in their kind, but this alone is the perfect kind of change; this only is true, full, lasting, consisting of the very Nature and Life of God, and therefore must of necessity abide with it, and admit of no change but what it is also capable of.

Now what is thy Religion? what image, what superscription beareth it? How rare is it to find the natural Religion of the spirit of man fairly improved and well grown? Alas, the Religion now abroad cannot justly satisfy the plain honest spirit of natural man! but where shall we find the second kind? and if we be put to it for the second, where shall we seek for the third?

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The present estate of Religion is exceeding sick and weak. Religion hath lost its first light, its first life, its first strength and vigor. True Religion eats out the life and strength of man, bringing forth a life of another nature; but where is there any Religion now which floweth out from the nature of man, which would easily be acknowledged, were the nature of man rightly measured and understood? We have indeed a great deal of humane knowledg of the things of God, a great many fleshly fabricks, but who can produce one spiritual building? The best symptomes that I find of Religion, are its sickness, its languishing. That which flourisheth and boasteth it self so much, savoreth too strongly of the flesh to pass for currant.

But alas, *who is truly sick!* We want a *Physician*, but who is prepared for the Physician! what work were there as yet for him, should he come but to wound, for who among the wounded hath his wound upon him?

I do not delight to afflict the spirits of men: but I confess it much grieves me to see them so greedily run after vanity, kindling such sparks, and walking in the light of such a fire, as serves only to lull themselves asleep at present with, but will not secure them from the bed of abiding sorrow. Read that place, *Isai. 50. 11. Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass your selves about with sparks: Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.* I am assured in my Soul that the Religion abroad will not save men; that under their professions and practises of holiness there is a root of wickedness which must to Hell, and they in whom it is found. It is not all the knowledg of Christ, nor faith

nor love, nor all the exercises of Religion of the common kind, that will save; but a new life, a new spirit, a renewed nature, which is a rarer thing then we commonly think for.

Being thus wounded, being thus afflicted for you, will ye think much that I speak a little to you, because in sounds somewhat harsh in your ears, because it strikes at the foundation, not of your outward worship (which ye cannot bear neither) but the very life and hope of your Souls? I am jealous over you, I would not have you cozened of eternal life, I would not have you trifle away your Souls in a dream. I would have you saved, therefore do I tell you of a deeper wound (which your sickness requires) then ye have yet been acquainted with. I would have you found for ever, therefore do I tell you of your lost estate, therefore do I strive to heave up that vail of seeming safety and happiness which covers your true misery from your eyes, and makes you run dancing into your own utter ruine.

Look upon the primitive Christians (ye pretend to be successors to them) where is the *truth* of that life which they once had? It is true, they had *spots* as well as you; but as your life is not their life, so your spots are not their spots. Ye confess ye want many circumstantial (tending to the outward glory of that state) which they had; but do ye not want the inward substance of that life which tends to the very Being of that state? (O Sirs, consider it, All the wit of man, All the art of man, All the serious industry of mans spirit, can never lay one stone in this building.) I will mention a few differences between us and them, and consider ye of what force they be. If any shall contend that there is no such difference, but his Religion is the same in these respects,

respects, I have nothing further to say against him, I have but given in my testimony, which is only so far valid as my spirit hath in true judgment searched and weighed this thing: nor doth it positively conclude against all Religion, No, It rather believeth that there is a seed of Truth somewhere, though deeply hid.

The especial differences (or at least some of them) which I have observed between Religion in its first birth and growth, and now in its state of deprivation or weak restitution by mans endeavors, are these, or in these respects.

1. It differs *in its descent*. That came down from God, The *sacrifices* therein were appointed by God, The *fire* which kindled their sacrifices was let down from Heaven: The Religion now extant is generally of the Earth, of mans pumping up from thence, which man is not able to justify to be the same with the former, though every sort would fain have theirs acknowledged to be so. There is indeed some kind of likeness, in some respects, in every way of Doctrine and Worship which man formeth out of the Scripture: but it is not *the life, the substance, the truth, the Religion* which the Lord once formed, and which the Lord alone can form again.

2. It differs *in its nature or principle*. That as it was from Heaven, so it was *heavenly*: There was a *seed of God, a seed of life*, which was sown and sprang up then. Now there is much natural, much artificial devotion, but it hath not this nature in it: The *repentance, the mortification, the self-denial, &c.* of this age, beareth not the image of the former. It is such a kind of thing as may deserve such a name here in this world, but not being set by the other. I do not say there is no such thing

thing now as the former principle, I rather believe the contrary : but I confess I think it very rare, and hardly visible so much as to it self.

3. It differs *in its guide*. That life had a guide, It had the Spirit of life to guide it : The life now, where it may be best supposed to be, is at a loss ; And though it may be given to the Spirit to be preserved, yet the Spirit is not given to it to make use of. No life now runs so high and pure, as to be entrusted with the Spirit. It may be secretly led into faith, into love, into prayer, into obedience by the Spirit, but it knoweth not that it is so, or its own motions when they are so. We are fain to take it for granted that our prayers and motions are such ; And when the natural or artificial fire burns in us any thing warmly (much more if our spirits be much heated) we readily take it for granted, without thorough searching, without true discerning (which is too difficult and costly) whether this be the heat, the warmth, the life of the Spirit or no ?

4. It differs *in its light*. They had a light suitable to their nature, suitable to their eye, suitable to the divine Spirit in them : We have a light suitable to our nature, suitable to our eye, suitable to our humane spirit : We see things just as other men see them ; We reason our selves into truths and practises, as any other man might do. I do not say that this should not be done (for the humane spirit is to go along, and to have its own light with it too,) but I cannot but say, that this is not enough.

5. It differs *in the things conversed with*. They were led into and did walk in the *substance* of things : They felt the *nature*, the *truth*, the *power* of Salvation : The life in them tasted and enjoyed the life of God in Christ.

Christ. They did not take it for granted that God was a Father, and that Christ was a Saviour, and was set up by God to dispense eternal life; but they were in his Fatherhood, they were in Christ, and had the eternal life of God and Christ in them. *They knew that they were of God, and that the Son of God was come, who gave them an understanding to know him that is true; and that they were in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ.* (And this was no high-flown fancy concerning God and eternal life, which consists only in the elevation of the imagination, but the truth.) *This is the true God, and eternal life, 1 Joh. 5. 19, 20.*

What shall we say then to these things? Is it not time for us to make a stand, and look about us? Is it not time for us to miss the Lord, and seek to begin with him? Man is naturally confident, and yet commonly deceived in the ground-work of his confidence. From our first springing up in Popery unto all our rents and divisions thence both in Doctrine and Worship, we have still been confident, that we have always been in the right. How vain is man! In every change he confesseth himself wrong, and yet that still to which he changeth must needs be right. Ah wretched man, There is a lye in thy heart, which springs up in all thy thoughts and ways of devotion; and until thou beest now formed, thou wilt not be capable of entertaining the truth, but only of deluding thy self! What should I advise thee? what can be proper for thee, but to examine the true ground, and joyn with the house of Israel in lamenting after the Lord? to bewail the loss of his light, his life, his guidance, his presence? The cause of joy is not, the cause of grief only is, and is in abundance; and where it is manifested with demonstration and

power, there will not need any exhortation to it. I must profess, I would rather chuse tears, although I were sure they should never be wiped away from mine eyes, after substance, after that which my spirit wants, and can alone take up with, then the greatest mirth or pleasure which vanity (for such I account all the Religion of man, with all that springs from it) can afford.

*Rejoyce in the Lord always.* They might well rejoyce always in the Lord, who enjoyed the Lord, who had a kind of constant presence of the *Bridegroom* in their spirits. Their Lord lived in them, walked with them, and kept them company by his Spirit. But is this spoken to us who are Orphans? (Though the spirit of man, in his several ways of Religion, is not an Orphan, therefore he may rejoyce also.) The same Spirit of the Lord which piped unto the Apostles and primitive Christians, administring unto them occasion of dancing, mourneth unto us, and our proper way of answering it is in lamentation.

Lament therefore after the Lord, and *mourn over Jerusalem*. Mourn over the ruines and desolations of *Jerusalem*: *Pity the dust of Sion*. *Jerusalem* hath been layd waste, *Sion* lieth in the dust, nay *Sion* is it self burnt into dust by the extream jealousie and fury of the Eternal, who hath let out his flames more fiercely upon her, then upon any abomination to be found among men. *Jerusalem hath drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury, yea it hath drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out*, *Isai. 52. 17*. Yet she is still *Jerusalem*, she is still *Sion*, and her very dust is lovely. The Lord knoweth her, and loveth her dust: and it is impossible for any to discover her native worth and beauty,

ty, and not to pity and mourn over her present condition. What, is this the Lords darling, is this the only beauty, will scoffing earth say? *Ismael* cannot but despise *Isaac* though growing, though thriving, though owned by the Lord; how contemptible then must he needs be in his death and burial? The world (wanting the inward eye) wonders to hear God speak such great things of his people, of the abundantly rich glory and excellency of *their life*, they appear so mean to them at the best. They never have the loveliness of man in them; how loathsom then must they needs be, when all that which is their own beauty is broken down in them! when the remainders of their earthly beauty, with the whole frame of their spiritual beauty, is dashed in peeces *like a potters vessel*, and burnt up together! Yet how precious is the seed of God under all these! how amiable is this very dust of *Sion*! The very brokenness, sickness, misery of this estate, is of more true value then all the soundness, then all the health of life and Salvation that is any where else to be found throughout the whole Earth. Yet this object is very lamentable, and it would grieve any ones heart to behold it. He who hath seen, known, tasted or had the least glimpse of *Sion* in her glory, O how would his heart throb at the view of her here! yet here, if not here alone, is she to be found.

Is it nothing to thee, *O thou Preserver of man*, that the *foundations* of thine own holy *Habitation* are thus shaken? Where is *thy Zeal*? where is *the sounding of thy Bowels* at the death and misery of thine own seed! O Lord, wilt thou also *bring forth children to the Murderer*? Awake, *O Lord*, Rouze up thy self; Let thine own *everlasting Spirit* stir in the motions of its own  
life,

life, and never leave till it hath raised up *disconsolate*  
*Jerusalem*, *desolate Jerusalem*, *afflicted Jerusalem*,  
*distracted Jerusalem*, *Jerusalem which is sunk, dead*  
*and rotten, Jerusalem which is not* ) and hath made it  
*the praise of the whole Earth. Amen.*

**F I N I S.**

